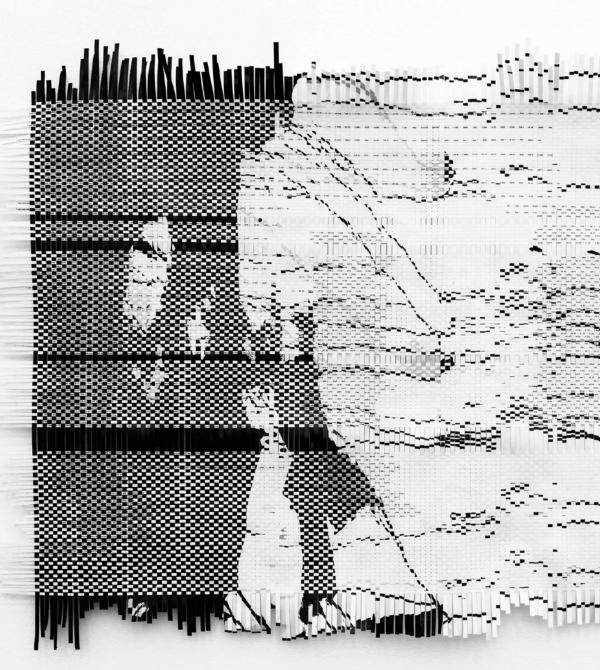
The Capilano Review

Translingual/Fall 2020



my tongue is my language

-Christian Vistan & Elisa Ferrari

THE CAPILANO REVIEW

ISSUE 3.42 / FALL 2020 TRANSLINGUAL

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Cover: Damla Tamer *Divination Objects (detail)* 2019-20 ink on paper, woven 127 x 81 cm Image credit: SITE Photography Image courtesy of the artist and the Contemporary Art Gallery

Editor's Note

The Capilano Review's Fall 2020 Translingual Issue reads like English but not quite English. "English English?" ask Vistan and Ferrari, pointing to how a phrase might contain two or more Englishes, or another language entirely. As well, as Sophie Seita and Klara du Plessis discuss, "there are sometimes invisible ways in which other languages (cultures, histories, practices) can be present in a text without easily identifiable external markers." The translingual may be a survival strategy, a coping mechanism, an ethic. It may be an opportunity to "stage confrontations between languages" or to consider how verbal resources interact "to generate new grammars and meanings, beyond their separate structures."

"There is something unbearable about language," writes Fan Wu, and "especially unbearable about English." The contributions here take aim at monolingualism's constraints, puncturing holes and bringing forth the body of language in all of its spillages and gaps. Questions of legibility—the intolerable duality of being "alienated within language's house" (Nicole Razia Fong)—are not resolved here. Rather, these works consider how one might read, incorporate, or intervene upon the English tradition, its imperial and foundational "source" texts.

In our attempts to preserve the integrity of these translingual soundings, we often struggled with the corrective and potentially homogenizing mechanisms of the editorial apparatus itself. For their engagement in this process, we are grateful to all the contributors who made this incredibly generous, alive, and beating body of work. As Sophie Seita instructs in her "Manifesto for Reading": "Let it percolate."

—Matea Kulić

¹ Sarah Dowling, *Translingual Poetics: Writing Personhood Under Settler Colonialism* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018): 5.

² Suresh Canagarajah, "Translingual Practice: Translingual Practice as Spatial Repertoires: Expanding the Paradigm beyond Structuralist Orientations," *Applied Linguistics* 39, no. 1 (2018): 31.

from gaps are eaten up by the reader

Christian Vistan & Elisa Ferrari

This text was written following five walks taken and recorded in July 2020 in our respective neighbourhoods of Ladner and Mount Pleasant on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Tsawwassen First Nations. On these walks, we read texts by and to each other alongside writing by Etel Adnan, Dylan Robinson, Édouard Glissant, Amelia Rosselli, Rhoda Rosenfeld, Craig Dworkin, and Harryette Mullen. The sonic environment is interpreted, translated, and foregrounded into text in the writing from these walks. Our process of writing and listening together began as an extension of our collaboration in Elisa's project *lilithlithlithlithlith: may tunog* for the 3rd Kamias Triennial in February 2020 in Quezon City, Philippines. *gaps are eaten up by the reader* is an excerpt from the forthcoming SMALL CAPS digital chapbook to be published by *The Capilano Review* in Fall 2020. — *Christian Vistan & Elisa Ferrari*

hear let's try and find a surface? a street

this way

yeah I think it is better if we go this way

or that way? this way

[mumbles]

how we

do you have all the papers?

no

okay okay do you have all of them? no I only printed yours

we can also stop

if we feel like if we find a nice seating spot

your envelope back?

it is useful

[c murmurs]
[e clears voice]

it was about temporality how do we wanna how do we wanna



let's go there under the

it's shaky I like this surface

[leafing through sheets of paper]

the person who asks the question

is in a position of power

she was asking the questions and she was asking the questions

someone else asked her

[getting closer and louder: what do you do? I get that

she's gone

through a lot but at some point you are saying that]

I'll start from here [muffler, laughs, city tones] she writes

"

listening

was like entering secret worlds.

I knew, in American, things I could not tell in any of the languages I knew, because my experiences in those languages were limited, or seemed limited, or were too familiar to keep for me a sense of discovery. "

[car drives by with low techno beats]

¹ Etel Adnan, "To Write in a Foreign Language," in *Unheard Words*, ed. Mineke Schipper, trans. Barbara Potter Fasting (London: Allison & Busby, 1985).

she writes differently about different times in her life

the language she has at that moment

overheard

enters

to communicate

to someone

but then I think

translation

is also not useful

talking to my mom and

translating

accountability responsabilità rendicontabilità trasparenza

it's part of the vocabulary

in my brain

a word that needs work around it

how to make word a word that has meaning

Oops

aphids
[humming
walking bird
paper]



if we are stuck

go somewhere else go somewhere else whenever we feel

[pedestrian on the phone: I'm more technically how/I am only now but I didn't heard/but it didn't hurt but I remember it was like weedy/but I remember it was bleeding]

I think they're contiguous I think they're contiguous

something

something that connects

next to each other

they share

an edge

[car]

languages are contiguous

[long thinking pause]

in English English? why two English? no no just English?

[loud bass beats from a car driving by]

this is where my thoughts were going



that she chose not to learn the other language because she is not studious

[mumbling]

" I did not take time out of everyday life to consecrate all my efforts to acquire Arabic as a full language. When the sun is strong and the sea is blue I can't close my window and go in and study anything. I am a person of the perpetual present so I stayed outside. Arabic remained a forbidden paradise. I am both a stranger and a native to the same land, [sounds of a mother walking by with her kid(s)] to the same mother tongue.

>>2

[voices in the background]

I don't know when this text was written

if we were to write

what are the things that the previous century told us to

[a song is playing in the background—too noisy to identify/a popular 70s core progression]

[shhhhhhh someone washing a car]

what she means when she says the moon

[deep muffler tone]

but it is also contradictory she spent ten fucking pages writing about



² Adnan, "To Write in a Foreign Language."

this is her looking back this is her looking back

[indistinct voices in the background]

I'm gonna take my shoes off

do you think one thinks better without shoes

no shoes you are in private

[papers]

maybe I'll read

from here

there is furniture

rhythm a unit

in the water of the sea of the river

Riverine tongue

a wave a wake

a wave awake

a slice a speech

 $\label{eq:could_I} \text{more than } I \text{ could understand}$ could I see the notes?



the	furn	iture

I respect furniture

it's missing a leg

the d's and b's

daybed

In a In a

you rest for

for more rest

[paper rustling]

"language assembles in passing in walking in sitting on tile on common tables on upholstered daybeds under rectangular light"³

[crow cawing keeps cawing cawing cawing]

furniture allows language to happen

[still cawing, louder struggle, muffled shorter cawing then]

furniture relates bodies reconfigure around furniture

furniture asks a body to reconfigure

³ Christian Vistan, *Pa-pag-page* (self-published, 2018).

arranging furniture

a profession

a text

and then you sit on that

[pages leaf]

[e bakit mo ko nakilala/e bakit mo ba ko inaya/e bikat mo na-ilage why did you recognize me/why did you invite me/why did you return and return]

are we inside?

I found

[whisper]

erba di san giovanni

you can peel it off

fig sap

unripe fig milk

eucalyptus

fungus fungus

the corn goes up sunflower

the squash is horizontal

the bean climbs the corn

peas?

corn

corn corn corn

potato

[grass hum motor rev]

"The narrator has no existence outside the text yet brings the text into existence.

glean words. shift syntactic blocks. make space between ideas.

The authority of a given voice is produced from a conjunction of social and rhetorical questions." ⁴

the touch implied

between two things touching?

[sound of a different park]

a derivative space [kids' voices, an airplane gets closer and closer]

just go for a walk then write

contiguity

this sentence is

out of two things

this and this

⁴ Elisa Ferrari, unpublished text (2018).

"the sonorous voice instead an index of a relational kind of uniqueness

I'll meet you at 10 am on August 21st"5

"riding in a car

writing poetry with one's body"6

riding as writing riding and writing

it requires saying to become text

"Surrealism is (si sa) rebellion to the Gods"⁷

because so much of it I can't understand

the hinge of the text

the fold

[ang alaga ko/the child I am taking care of]

relation is a practice, then she says "language is a practice, practices of relations"

⁵ Ferrari, unpublished text.

⁶ Adnan, "To Write in a Foreign Language."

⁷ Amelia Rosselli, "Diario in tre lingue / Diary in three tongues (1955-56)," in *Locomotrix. Selected Poetry and Prose by Amelia Rosselli*, ed. and trans. Jennifer Scappettone (University of Chicago Press, 2012).

⁸ Ferrari's notes from Lisa Robertson and Yaniya Lee's lecture "Rock Garden," *Beginning with the Seventies* symposium, Belkin Art Gallery, UBC, March 7, 2020.

you took concise notes we have a document

[airplane, a caw]

a bridge

I think about the history of smokers' candies mint nicotine

the recipe sealed

"I taste the history of imperialism"9

things that go in your mouth are words

lingua the tongue lingua the language

the mouth is the place where languages exist

a lingua is la mia lingua è l'italiano la mia lingua è l'inglese

my tongue is my language

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⁹ Ferrari, unpublished text.

"The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes how I obtain this language"10

The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes The unknown tip to the tongue perfectly describes

how I obtain this language (chorus)

a tongue modulates

?

[bells bells bells]

and the lozenge

can your mouth still listen

¹⁰ Christian Vistan, unpublished text (2018).

LANGUAGE IS NOT AN OPENING, FISSURE, "LIGHT SHINING THROUGH" ETC., IT IS A HOLE THAT I FALL INTO

Tatum Howey

The trans body is always spoken for, Who *breathes me out and away?* You do.

The legitimate subject requires information.

A lexicon to be developed.

In order for them
to be heard
a lexicon needs to be developed
in order to be
understood.

The lexicon, however resists categorization fragments bursts apart.

To begin,
the process of articulation,
the lexicon of my speech.
Codified meaning;
these symbols signal a speaking being
who opens their mouth and says...

Queerness is just a subject position, like the spectacle of opera.

A vocal labour of going on saying I knowing it's not I of wanting you in the plural.

PRAXIS, OR: I AM TRYING TO FIND A WAY THROUGH AND OUT OF LANGUAGE

You give a lecture on the "Erotics of Translation"

You speak about longing as displacement

The interim, the in-between

You say the translated

Text is foreign, "trans," othered

Is my body the text which you speak of, with desire?

I repeat to myself Garza's supposition: tongue to tongue

Tongue to tongue

I wonder: is translation an act to establish the other

As a legitimate object, or is the translated text a linguistic system

With its own codified meanings, that seeks to frame the subjugated other's experience

And is this, then, why I am suspicious of it

I wanted to live outside of language

Because language does more than lie, like you say it does

I speak through a lattice to you, says Paul Celan

If translation is the act of puncturing holes through a surface

Then it is also a failure

It is always full drama with you

Stop consonants, sibilants, open vowels, fricative and affricate consonants, labiodental affricates, a myriad of notes from voiceless to voiced, alveolar and dental affricates. These all contribute as notation to the score of phonetics. They dictate the utterance: how the tongue should hit the roof of the mouth, the lips separate, how air is directed through and out. And on a more essential, technical, level—they are the nominal elements of language.
Come here to me.
May you love me.
I have to ask you to stop.

It is difficult to address a you that is always shifting.

Four Poems

Klara du Plessis

Lungscapes

The fricative reclines in its resonance across languages and landscapes / landskappe en tongskappe / vibrating at the frequency of speech

The thing about expansiveness is that it never comes to an end / einder being a placeholder for the line of sight circling around continents / consonants thrill-seeking and trilling

Each word sinks beneath the horizon of its throat. Oral moon leaves one last ovum glimmering in the nighttime stratum of the sentence. Straddling grammar, the egg / eier / eie / ei / staggers inside its own weight, the shell needling its decline with the technology of a crack

Crack the whip of vocab. *Eina*, roep die sin / sinful / sonde / sondage.

See, a survey of sounds shows a sensational reliance on similarity, on familiarity, intimacy, coitus interruptus, on a firm verbal handshake shivering

across the surface of poems, loanwords, and dictionaries in all languages

Dipping in and out of relevance / reverb fricative / returns with daybreak / line break / crisps diction with gruff crackling of spikes, spittle, and frills

To separate a sound into functionality, then to reunite it with gentle endlessness / langskap einders of / lungscapes

Landskappe (Afrikaans) landscapes
En (Afrikaans) and
Tongskappe (Afrikaans) tonguescapes (neologism)
Einder (Afrikaans) horizon
Eier (Afrikaans) egg
Eie (Afrikaans) own
Ei (Afrikaans) used in "vir 'n appel en 'n ei" for a mere song
Eina, roep die sin (Afrikaans) ouch! the sentence exclaims
Sonde (Afrikaans) sin
Sondage (French) survey
Langskap (Afrikaans) longscape (neologism)
Einders (Afrikaans) horizons
Of (Afrikaans) or

Shine a poem / poets 'n gedig

Past tense *ge-*Present tense *gedig*

Present tense dig Past tense dug

Ge-dig
Dig the poem / gedug

Dug the poem *Gedugte digter*

Daunting poet *Poets 'n gedig*

Present tense *dig*To compose a poem

Past tense *gedig*To have composed

Present tense *gedig*Past tense *ge*-

Ge- (Afrikaans) prefix for past tense formation Gedig (Afrikaans) poem Dig (Afrikaans) to write poetry Gedug / gedugte (Afrikaans) daunting, formidable Poets 'n gedig (Afrikaans) polish, shine a poem

Mouthing mouth thing

The mouth is a land-locked organ mond with an opening into air, in other words, the mouth is a coastal organ monding expressing itself into the water known as air, in other words, sky inlets enter the body that is land that is being, mond ding in other words, words and air trade is for in the soft airstrip of in-between mondig

Mond (Afrikaans) mouth Mond (German) moon Monding (Afrikaans) estuary Mond ding (Afrikaans) mouth thing Mondig (Afrikaans) of age Is (Afrikaans) is

-ing / ge-

Breath becomes breathe and spit becomes spirit.

Just like giving up the ghost gee die gees lets the geese take wing as if wings were for the taking

One wing is
-ing and and the other *ge*Verb becoming noun and *gees gegee*noun becoming past
continuity, an asymmetry

of wings and lungs
lunging along the migratory
patterns of the chest. heilige gees
Wings grafted to the back,
breathing the outer air

Gee die gees (Afrikaans) give up the ghost Ge- (Afrikaans) prefix for past tense formation Gees gegee (Afrikaans) gave up the ghost Heilige gees (Afrikaans) holy ghost

The preceding poems are excerpted from a new and still in-progress manuscript written in collaboration with Khashayar Mohammadi. Composed trilingually in English, Afrikaans, and Farsi, the manuscript hinges on the shared x (or g) fricative sound prevalent in both Afrikaans and Farsi.

Adjacent to (Many) Languages

Klara du Plessis & Sophie Seita

Klara du Plessis is a poet, critic, and literary curator. Sophie Seita works with text, sound, and translation on the page, in performance, and often in collaboration. Sophie and Klara crossed paths on the internet and through their respective publications before meeting in person in early 2020. Klara then invited Sophie into this conversation for *The Capilano Review* as a venue to trace shared interests in language, literature, performance, and curatorial endeavours. A prelude rather than a finale – may this discussion keep evolving.

Klara du Plessis As I enter this document in English, I exit another shared document in Afrikaans and Dutch, a similar conversation on language and poetry across national, linguistic, and visceral, physical borders. Two tabs open side-by-side as my mind shifts from composition in one language to expression in another. Considering both English and Afrikaans to be first languages, I wrote my debut, multilingual (or translingual) collection, *Ekke*, with an awareness of these languages' simultaneity in who I am as a presence in language. I enjoyed writing with the languages as equal entities, interweaving, interacting, and blocking each other out. Now, some years later, my curiosity has shifted, perhaps only temporarily, but I notice these languages residing adjacent to one another in my writing—my second collection of poetry is in English and I'm working on a manuscript of Afrikaans poetry. I'm currently interested in how these two languages influence each other surreptitiously, invisibly. I'm curious to explore the difference of my Afrikaans due to my Montréal-based life in English (and French), or to pick up on cultural residue or patina traced by Afrikaans onto the way I use English.

Sophie Seita I'm immediately drawn to some of the descriptive words in your linguistic origin story: your prepositional implication of being "adjacent" to a language, which for me also translates into standing next to or moving alongside a particular practice, linguistic or not. I'm also interested in thinking about the metaphor of interweaving as a material engagement with language, which reminds me of Bauhaus textile artist Anni Albers's call for a "tactile sensibility." "Residue" and "patina" similarly suggest matter, substance, and a process of weathering or time passing. I feel comfortable in that processual layering, those material tracings, and would situate myself there. More concretely and less poetically, my thinking and feeling space is English, which became my first language a long time ago, even though I wasn't born with it, and which I had to learn, and learnt a bit like music, looking for the right pitch and rhythm. It replaced German, my "mother tongue," a language I now translate into English. I also have Italian roots (that's where my surname comes from) and I speak Spanish. In fact, I came back to German through translation. Not that I ever "left" it really, but emotionally, creatively, and intellectually I certainly have. So when I translate now it's both like tapping into something intimate and weirdly foreign, which feeds my innate curiosity about words and sounds as resolutely grounded in unfamiliarity.

KdP The linguistic adjacency we both associate with, as well as the simultaneous intimacy and distance you describe in relation to German, pushes our discussion into the terrain of translingualism. Sarah Dowling's study, *Translingual Poetics*, counters monolingualism as a settler ideology that attempts to linearize relationships between

language, ethnicity, and nationhood. She writes, "I use the term translingual ... because it describes the capacity of languages to interact, influence, and transform one another ... the term translingual allows scholars to move away from the monolingual/multilingual binary and to recognize a range of competencies across, as well as within, languages." It's important to acknowledge that both our language sets—English, Afrikaans¹, Dutch, German, French, Spanish, and Italian—are Eurocentric languages that are explicitly laden with colonial baggage. That said, the way I use my set of languages is a deliberate attempt to perforate the foundations of multiple monolingualisms, to lay bare the fragility of monolithic and self-contained linguistic structures, and to recontexualize them as relational entities. M. NourbeSe Philip talks about the "rupturing of language" in her own dismantling and reconstruction of English in Zong!. It's a useful way for her to think about how languages can be interrogated and opened up for air. Prepositions take on a degree of importance—what is between languages, in languages, through languages, towards languages, across languages.

SS Uljana Wolf, the German poet I've translated most frequently, thinks a lot about the translingual. In her playful manifesto-like essay, "What we talk about when we talk about translingual poetry," she says, "a poem is never written as one language" and "the multilingual poem speaks as language." She's trying to distinguish between surface-level multilingualism and translingual writing because, for her, "a multilingual poem can be monolingual in its thinking" just as a "monolingual poem can be multilingual in its thinking." That distinction acknowledges that there are sometimes invisible ways in which other languages (cultures, histories, practices) can be present in a text without easily identifiable external markers. It also reminds me of the critique Sandeep Parmar makes in "Not a British Subject: Race and Poetry in the UK," in which she argues that the expectation (primarily from a white audience) of a proliferation of "exotic tropes" comes at the expense of "nuanced, fluid, transcultural paradigms of racial and national identity." So it's also a question about form and not (just) content.

Whether it's the translingual in the ostensibly monolingual poem or, as you suggest, the possibility of dismantling and remaking from within, the translingual can be a way of loosening structures and strictures of belonging. We're constantly being asked to define ourselves and prove our belonging—be this to a language, a nation, or a discipline—which is related to authority (a disciplining), which is often negotiated materially, on and through materials (i.e. paper is a material on and through which

¹ Afrikaans is an interesting case, being both a settler language developing out of Dutch and one that originated on African soil in proximity to and engagement with other languages used in Southern Africa.

belonging, careers, and citizenship are negotiated). For me, in particular, this movement across that's embedded in the translingual is deeply connected to my desire for the transdisciplinary, the transmedial.

KdP You raise an important question about the relationship between belonging, definition, and language. The possible ways that one language can invisibly refract into many, while retaining its formal status as English or German or whatever, is something I've been thinking about a lot as I wait for my collection Hell Light Flesh to be released. While this book is resolutely written in English—and I refused to pepper it with linguistic markers that might have signaled geography—it is, for me, very much based in South Africa and emanates from a knowledge of Afrikaner culture. It is strange, even alienating, to think that this book will be read in the context of CanLit, by an English-speaking readership that might not make the leap of language and place. My thinking hesitates between two poles: does publishing an English book for an English-speaking readership render it monolingual? Or does my affiliation with South Africa, as well as the book's latent curiosity with Afrikaner culture, surface as multilingual monolingualism, as translingual? These are questions I prefer to leave unanswered, questions that probably only have answers that constantly shift and morph. These questions are relevant to a broader spectrum of texts other than my own, of course — how are writing and language linearized through monolingual assumptions and dominant cultures, or how are writing and language able to assert their belonging across borders, cultures, and contexts. This discussion, and Uljana's quotes you referenced in relation to poetry and language, reminds me of words by Rosi Braidotti, which have stayed with me from the first time I read them: "writers can be polyglots within the same language; you can speak English and write many different Englishes ... Becoming a polyglot in your own mother tongue: that's writing."

SS What a brilliant quote—I love the phrase "polyglot in your own mother tongue"—I'm going to remember that! I'm curious to hear more about your feeling of strangeness at the thought that your book might be encountered in a way that doesn't recognize the culture from which it emanates. Do you think there's an ideal reader for your or anyone's work? Or can the non-ideal, imperfect reader become exactly the right kind of reader, whose not-quite-getting-it is in fact the most readerly reading experience? Etymologically, to read means to guess. How do I allow myself and my audiences to not-know? I'm reminded of Jack Halberstam's seductive promise in the Queer Art of Failure that "intuition and blind fumbling might yield better results" than the normalization and routines that academic disciplines create for our thinking and

learning. But this equally applies to an original-versus-copy-fixated translation or the transparency-sheet vision of writing. I'm intrigued by the wayward forms and directions of my reading and who my teachers of reading are—writers, artists, musicians, thinkers, even objects, etc. I've started work on a book of essays, tentatively called *Lessons of Decal*, where I explore these questions. A decal is a copy, a transfer, of forms and knowledge. A decal also describes an exchange between mediums. So, I'm thinking quite seriously, but also frivolously, about these readerly lessons, about our chosen inheritance and kinships, and about how we can make specifically feminist and queer decals in and through our reading, writing, and making.

KdP I'm so looking forward to reading your new book of essays! But regarding an ideal reader—no not at all, I don't have one in mind; in fact, a culturally specific readership might be exactly the wrong audience. What I am more curious about is the stretching across (back to that preposition!), the gesture of leaning over geography, connecting parts in language and art, then seeing what happens next—generative uncertainty. Leaning, which is a lengthening, but also a folding, an overlaying, a copying. You mentioned the transmedial in passing, Sophie, and a linguistic metaphor of leaning and interconnecting also rings true in terms of work that crosses disciplines and media. I'm thinking of your performance-lectures. I'm also thinking of the literary curatorial work I've been doing (in particular, the project that I've been calling Deep Curation) that places the undertheorized form of the poetry reading into conversation with performance art, participatory art, archival art; it attempts to activate the repertoire by incorporating ways of thinking about literary performance as something beyond its immediate and accepted context. This is becoming a whole other discussion, but it's amazing how one's understanding of a distinct art form or genre or work can shift just by considering it in relation to a different critical nexus. Both of us enjoyed reading Kate Briggs's This Little Art, which is a book on the process of translation, but also a book about living, about how living influences and reacts to the translating, writing, and languaging one becomes imbricated in when working with any kind of text. In a sense, the relationships between author-text-reader and original-copy, or the connections between transmedial performances and experiments, are infused with the organicism and flexibility of the far stretch and the tight fold; to phrase it more concretely, they are infused with the relational connections and divergences between subjects, genres, and events.

SS I love the simultaneity of contraction/condensation and expanse that you describe in the action of leaning! My question about readers was sort of rhetorical; but also, not quite. I actually think I do have a reader in mind, a known audience I address. My first

readers are always people close to me. There's a long history of small-press writers and art communities making work for each other and I identify with that gesture, not as a gesture of exclusivity but of dedication and community. At the same time, I'm most thrown into recognition when someone unknown to me reads my work and sees lines of connection, of meaning. I actually remember my friend Erin Robinsong telling me she ran into you at the Montréal airport and you were reading a book of mine—and that was before we knew each other. I love serendipity. I also love when people unfamiliar with my work, or unfamiliar with performance or experimental writing, hear a performance or a text of mine and get something out of it. When someone is moved and transformed through that process of discovery—that's a moment of magic. But it's not an outcome I can plan or predict. I'm also currently part of an artist development program called Constellations that supports artists who work with and want to explore socially engaged practices, community-oriented art, and other forms of non-white-cube public art. So, these big questions of audience, engagement, participation, authorship, attribution, collaboration, and accessibility are very much on my mind. To come back to this bibliophilic memoir that I'm working on and to add another metaphor for translation into the mix: translation is a decal. You can even escalate that process by making decals of decals. A Möbius strip of readings. For me, translation is ultimately a reading-turned-writing. It teaches you to pay attention. A process of slowly trickling through. Which requires a porosity.

from Chambersonic (I)

Oana Avasilichioaei

This is a lecture on phonetics

1.6		
let form be oral	a foundation of phonemes	
	of profitnes	
sonorities		
are		
dis tri b		
ted		
	an impossible lone sound	
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Language Acquisition

Sho Sugita

What happens to an erasure of the unwritten *damnatio memoriae* of the unsculpted

or rongeurs gnawing at the undeveloped tissues of record keeping the remains now calcine, brittle

copies another copy
in the processing, corroded
halftones breaking up
a slowing cycle
granular pigments
with no means to reach
a zero-point.

The spectacle of a blind lust for collecting fragments from a book of newspaper archives a fragment of a fragment, never to be understood. The worth of saving the dust is a personal note, a eulogy.

December 27, 1945. Lesson 1. The beginning of a language: military glossary

兵士 ソルダツト soldat 將校 オフイツエル ofitser 上官 ナチヤニツク nachal'nik

tracing familiar phonetics of those who had spoken the vernacular sometime before

I ya

I am Nakamura

You vih

Who are you?

He on

He is a soldier named Mori

Who kto

Who is the officer? Who is the commander?

An equivalence, assimilated.
Unfurling leaves—shredded umbrella plants—a particular.
Something touchable. Ingestible.
No need for recognizable sounds
as all the new particulars become part of the body
with torn straws on the wall as real as ever.
Pechka, and outside—seeing breath
about 15 km from town
the workers come to Raichikhinsk.

December 27, 1945. Lesson 2. The house is small. The road is good. The car is big. Do you have tobacco and matches? How old is Kanemoto?

What little is found outside of the surrounding clusters of adjectives—
the grandiose, the hundred million of this for that the blood and sweat, the scythe.

Between embellishments, a moment of clarity: the sparrows are the same sparrows, on the same snow covering the roofs.

Sections of this poem were appropriated from *Nippon Shimbun (Japan Times*), a prison newspaper that was distributed in Siberian labour camps from 1945-1949, in addition to declassified CIA files on nearby regions from the same period. The author's grandfather was a detainee/prisoner of war in the Amur Oblast between 1945-1950.

Damla Tamer

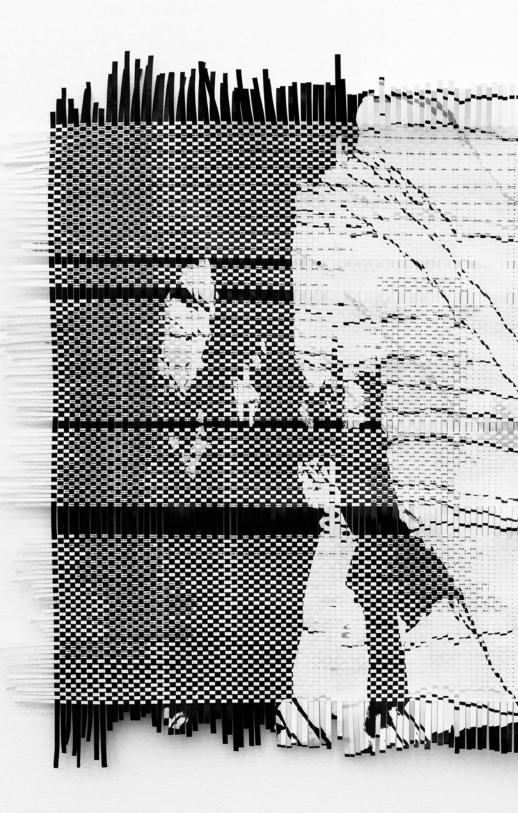
Divination Objects

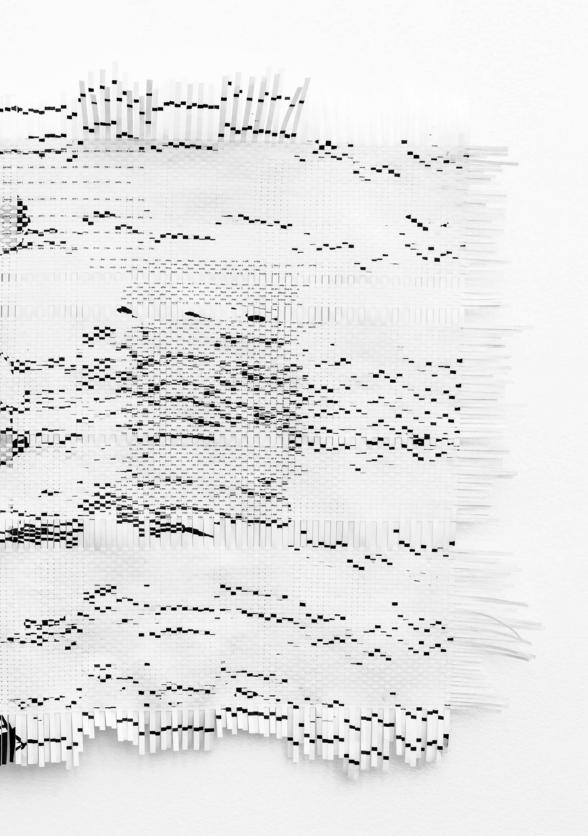
Weaving ink stain drawings with teaching evaluation surveys, *Divination Objects* ruminates on the ethics of living and learning. Tamer draws upon the traditional ikat weaving technique in which horizontal and vertical threads are dyed prior to being woven in anticipation of a final pattern. Just as the future-investedness of ikat weaving denotes a preoccupation with assumed futurity, teaching evaluations ask students to assign value to already constructed statements. Statements such as "Overall, the instructor was an effective teacher" fail to capture the realities of vulnerability, trust, and risk that embody the learning experience for both teachers and students. In theorizing the potentials of image-based divination techniques, Tamer proposes a temporal reading and rereading of the image, a continually recast relationship between the symbolic and material.

Following pages:

Damla Tamer *Divination Objects* 2019-20 ink on paper, woven 127 x 81 cm Installation views from *The Artist's Studio is Her Bedroom* at the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver 2020

Image 1 and 2 credit: SITE Photography Courtesy of the artist





tor we n eff an eff ve te er. Ov an er ve te ir. Oi I, the an eff /e te r. Ov s an ctive :her. rall, sanı :tive her. s an ctive :her. rall, ucto san (tive! ner. (a ve te er. O l, the ffect each vera ruct is an ctive ther. r tor w n eff e tea r. Ov each vera

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Chantal Gibson

How to Read Your Book (or What Hegemony Looks Like)

Some lessons are taught, some lessons are imposed. *How to Read Your Book* is a series of large-scale reproductions from an old Canadian grade-school speller. These painted posters are referenced in my debut poetry collection *How She Read* (Caitlin Press, 2019). These are the stories my mother grew up reading as a Black girl in 1950s Halifax. I too remember reading about Pygmies in my 1970s Oshawa classroom. The content of the stories (myths, stereotypes, tropes) and the illustrations unpack the graphic colonial enterprise, highlighting the systemic racism in Canadian institutional texts. The black lines illuminate the silencing and erasure of BIPOC voices — while imagining the lessons learned by the young reader, in particular, what a Black girl, like my mom, might be thinking about herself after reading these texts (again and again).

Following pages:

Chantal Gibson Erasure poems from *The Canadian Vocabulary Speller 4th Grade*, Macmillan Canada, 1948 2019 printed canvas, black acrylic paint 61 x 91 cm

Image credit: Adrian Bisek Courtesy of the artist with support from the BC Arts Council

PUPIL'S NAME_

The anadian PUPILS' OWN VOCABULARY SPELLER

TEXT-WORKBOOK EDITION



· ARTHUR I. GATES · · HENRY D. RINSLAND · INA C. SARTORIUS · CELESTE COMEGYS PEARDON ·

The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited

Pilgrims and Indians

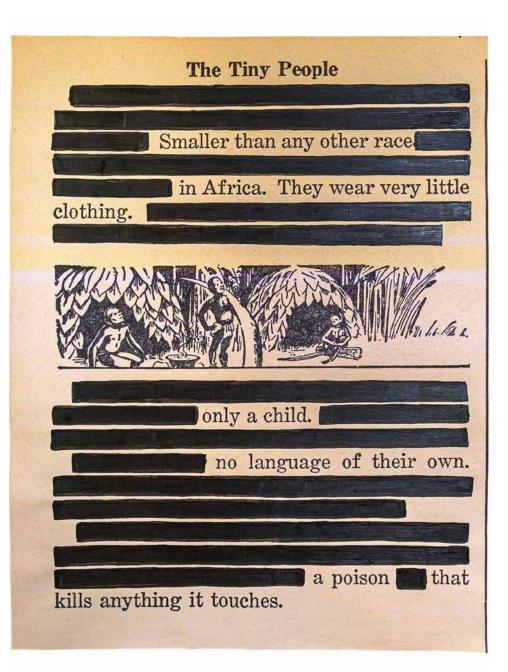
Although the Pilgrims landed on the famous rock as early as November, it was March before they became friendly with any Indians.

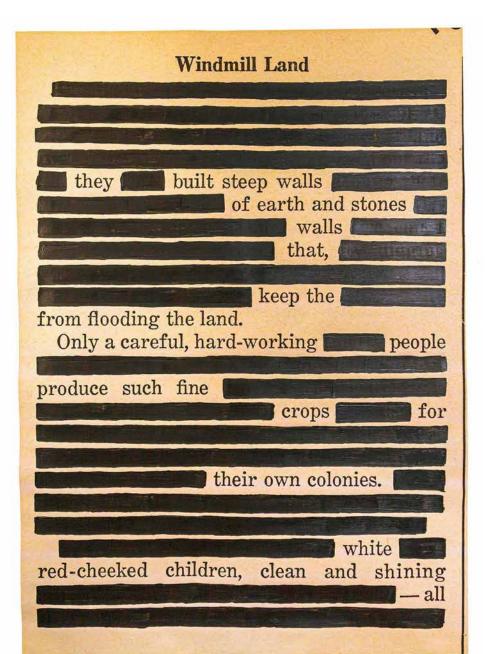
Can you imagine their surprise when suddenly one morning an Indian walked all alone up to the door of a house and began to address the Pilgrims in their own language? True, it was rather broken English. He said his name was Samoset and he was there only in order to fish.



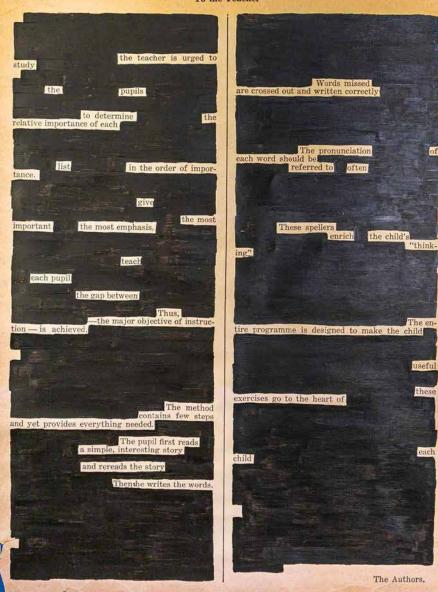
The Indian was hungry, and so the Pilgrims gave him plenty to eat. Since he did not want to leave, they let him spend the night there.

The next day Samoset told the Pilgrims about their neighbours to the south, who were angry with the English because some of the English had tricked them. Samoset finally went away, with presents in his arms. The Pilgrims must have been glad indeed to find one friendly Indian!





To the Teacher



these

name me rebel

Amal Rana

name me rebel name me ashes rising from the phoenix name me besharam aurat dangerous transgressor too demanding for the cause too emotional name me sweetheart bachi dear beautiful abhorrent deviant unbeliever name me scheherazade's tongue turned rebel forking out in a thousand and one ways dethroning the self-appointed gatekeepers of morality and imperial emperors crowned with laurels made from drones

this is the time for a puja of accounting call forth the butcher of gujarat masquerading in the robes of democracy this is the time for inqualibi namaaz led by women demanding justice for their sisters for 1984 this is the time for khadijah's pen ayesha's warrior ululations striking fear in the hearts of men this is the time of the sword blading its way through your silence

the erasing of so many histories into tales of male rebels

when they ask you who I am tell them I am the forgotten lover, aapa, ammi, dadi, naani, mami, chachi, khala, beti, who nurtured the heart, soul, body, mind, spirit of all the ashfaqulla khans, bhagat singhs, sukhdevs, azads and rajgurus tell them I am the mother who fed the men who made the history books men whose photos hang at revolutionary melas with only a tiny handful of women tell them I am the forgotten women of the komagata maru inquilabi spirits still wandering the floor of the salish sea

tell them my name is durga bhabhi
kartar dhillon
gulab kaur
bhikaji cama
tell them my name is not just malala
but also momina bibi murdered by an american drone
aafia sadiqui
asia bibi
ask them why they claim to speak for us but refuse to say our names

tell them my name is much more than rebel my name is life the seal not of suleiman but bilqis

an armed uprising of jannat's houris shredding apart your orientalist dreams and their feigned piety my name is rebellion's lightning my tongue azadi's forge because freedom cannot be won by begging

o sisters my resisters

when they ask you who you are tell them your name is not just rebel your name is a burning in every pind a raging in every shaher a fever in every child's veins a storming of every jail a flooding of every river a reawakening in every masjid, gurdwara and mandir the rage of a thousand jallianwala baghs the resilient roots of global uprisings from gaza to manila to lahore, ambala and jammu to the unceded coasts of turtle island a birthing of all the revolutions that have gone and all those to come your name carries entire oceans and seas your name is a vastness so deep the colonizers froth with fear your name burns indelible, coals beneath the ashes our forgotten sisters breathing life into new flames of ghadar

This poem is a homage to the forgotten revolutionary histories of South Asian women. It is inspired by Ghadar poetry. The Ghadar Party was an anti-colonial resistance movement for an independent India. It was founded by settler immigrant Indians (Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu) in the early 1900s. Vancouver was an active site for organizers, many of whom were Punjabi. Poetry played a central role in the movement, used as a means of communication to counter surveillance efforts. Interspersing Urdu words, "name me rebel" references famous male anti-colonial revolutionaries who resisted the British in India and asks what happened to the stories of the women who supported them.

Original Ghadar poems that served as inspiration (in Punjabi and English):

Ghadar Poem

Kade Mangyian Milann Azadiyan Na Hunde Tarliyan Naal Na Raj Loko Karo Na Minnat Ainwe Bano Na Kaiyar Fardo Talwar Ehnan Nahin Rahnna Agge Veero Arjiyan Ne Ki Banna Liya Zalam Firangyian Ne Desh Kha Liya Freedom is not obtained by begging
By appeals political power is not won
Do not petition like cowards
Take the sword and they will run
What have all the petitions done?
The cruel foreigners have eaten our homeland

jo koi pooche ke kaun ho tum

jo koi pooche ke kaun ho tum to kah do baaghi hai naam apna zulm mitaana hamaara pesha ghadar ka karna hai kaam apna namaaz-sandhya yahi hamaari paath pooja bhi sach yahi hai dharam karam sach yahi hai yaaro vahi khuda bhi o ram apna

if they ask you who you are

if they ask you who you are tell them that your name is Rebel that your occupation is to wipe out tyranny that your work is to create *ghadar* (tumult) that this is your *namaaz* and your *sandhya* that this is the way you worship that this is your only true religion that this is your *khuda*, that this is your *Ram* — Kartar Singh Sarabha, translation by Ali Mir

[namaaz and sandhya are respectively referring to Muslim and Hindu rituals of prayer, khuda is the way Muslims refer to god, and Ram is a major Hindu deity]

On the Alchemy of Fields

Nicole Raziya Fong

"It is from language that speech must be delivered." – Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*

During a recent conversation with a friend, we struck upon the topic of her nearly complete collection of Nancy Drew hardcovers. I immediately pictured them as they had appeared in my childhood: books aged prematurely by the humidity of numerous seasons spent reading them in the Caribbean. Their deckled pages had been aerated with a random scattering of pinprick punctures—lesions which were created by small worms that would bore through the books, at times (to my horror) even appearing upon their pages as I was reading. Alongside this foundational "oeuvre" were British children's classics meant to impart a hierarchical landscape of manners I found intriguing. In reading these books I keenly felt myself to be a spectator, a feeling I was already well used to. As I read about Nancy or Anne or Mary, ants wove through my grandmother's house in Trinidad and rain fell heavily upon the corrugated steel roof.

While colonial rule had been placed comparatively in the past by the world my parents immigrated to, in the tropics I still experienced its echo. I wondered what it meant to be a "former subject" of this legacy. My grandmother, a retired schoolteacher, was presumably aware of the social coding of these texts, which were emblematic of the appropriate social education for the "post-colonial" child. By extension, they were emblematic of the material a diasporic child of mixed-race might attach, from the other side, to such an upbringing. Needless to say, the beginning of my education, in that word's truest sense, remained far in the future and would require a great deal of unlearning.

The recurrent image of those Nancy Drew hardcovers offered me nothing more in the present than it was capable of offering then: the false sense of shared experience with a friend whose collection was far more complete than anything I could have found in my grandmother's house and whose racial background could not have

necessitated a reading experience comparable to my own. I am not interested in participating in a narrative I was thoughtlessly written into upon the involuntary occasion of my birth. The discontinuity of image, word, and actuality are all equivalent surfaces. To read in translation—I do this always.

*

I was given a language. This language was directive. A series of titles appeared to me with insistence and, one might say, urgency: girl, diasporic, mixed-race, second-generation. I was awarded additional designations through trial and error: daughter, sister, granddaughter. I struggled beneath these titles, attempting to fashion my face in a manner that would adequately reflect these names. I struggled in this way for many years.

One day, I came to be introduced to another language. A poet, also of Caribbean background, invited me to her home. She spoke to me of poetry, generously lending me a stack of books, which she encouraged me to read and copy out. A scintillating, unforeseen world opened up before me: that of Charles Baudelaire, Saint-John Perse, Arthur Rimbaud. In awe of the books, I was afraid to touch them lest a single page become marred. I gingerly read a few, overwhelmed by the the spillage this opened up over the modes of articulation that I had both accepted and struggled against up to that point.

I took on my own name: *poet*. After returning the books, I never visited that apartment again.

*

English is neither my father nor mother tongue yet it is the language I've existed within and alongside. In childhood, I spent a period of time unable to speak because of things that happened to me. When the words came back they did so with brokenness and fragility. I've spent time trying to retrain that fearful voice, and to learn other languages, but I'm still aware of the strange sensation of the invisible patriarch or colonial master—which I envision being a French man, a Dutch man, an English man on a plantation in Tobago blocking the light, giving commands in Guyana, presiding over Suriname's bauxite roads. I'm still alienated within language's house, kept at a distance from fully occupying any one of its rooms.

What the language of speaking establishes is both encounter and code, demand and surfactant, collusion and refusal—I am challenged to interiorize this speaking, whose inadvertent placement within my body presents itself as a limit. One can encounter and establish oneself within other limits, but the conditions of this language, the rules which dictate the reach of my expression, remain the same.

Not because I want to avoid speaking about my past, but that the conditions of my past are inordinately tied to the ways in which language so often takes power in an unspeakable way.

I've since given myself a few names in addition: painter, lover, warrior, survivor.

*

Not that I want to avoid speaking of my past, but that so little was passed on from the pasts that I originated from. So spent years processing a deeply felt, inherited silence.

I had always lived alongside the awareness that "I" had come from elsewhere, though the terms of this elsewhere remained uncertain. Elsewhere's assumptions were always immediate, somatic. One cannot begin to alter the specificity of one's face to pass beneath the gaze of this elsewhere. I began to understand its implications as it began to iterate: elsewhere was catastrophic; elsewhere was benign; elsewhere was a footnote at the margins, left in exception of the mainstream. One could read of this elsewhere. While I would often try to locate myself there, what the words revealed could not touch my experience. The words excluded my lived reality, removing me from any line of connection to those who might know more about navigating the strange situation of lostness I found myself in.

I was unable to access any preexisting explanation which might clarify this gaze of occlusion directing itself towards the past—such a means of understanding could not, after all, exist. Colonialism's natal alienation reaches endlessly forward, such that I know little about those ancestors who preceded me on continents I am now only able to visit as an outsider. At times I would attempt to follow a line, a trace already established by family members who came before me, but the end to this line would arrive quickly and definitively. What my mother knew of her past was not my own, nor what little my father knew.

Trauma as that which negates (falsely but with great conviction) the credibility of the present. Which also undoes the possibility of claiming any relation to the past. Not that I want to avoid speaking about my past, but that I found it preferable not to speak, then. I turned to poetry to cope with the present's intolerable surface.

*

To touch again upon a "source" of poetic language, moving beyond disclosure of an inadvertently foundational experience, a worm-eaten Nancy Drew hardcover and borrowed English translation of Baudelaire—

My language began to undergo a process of expansion. That borrowed copy of Saint-John Perse became my first introduction to the possibility of speaking from a place in the Caribbean (a goal which would not remain my main intention). The ironies of Perse, a white French diplomat and colonial presence in the Caribbean, acting as such an introductory presence did not register until later. While I aimed to come up with my own way of speaking, an authentic means by which the poetry I hoped to write could be transmitted, this sense of alienation continued to suffuse the books I had previously found solace in.

I found myself participating in an intolerable duality. I wrote without the belief that poetry could be used to achieve the consecutive line I hoped it might establish, and yet I remained unable to pass beyond the absolute nature of poetry's magnetic force. What was it that I was trying to give voice to? The trajectories of my own life and being remained obscure to me. I lived facing multiple planes of disconnection at all times: sustained memory loss caused by childhood trauma separated me from the world I had already passed through, while dissociation and Complex PTSD's effects on mental health distanced me from the world I had created for myself in the present, causing echoes from the past to resurface in disempowering and often retraumatizing ways. The generational consequences of colonial displacement, violent deaths, and mental illness severed me from maintaining any reliable connection to my extended family. Poetry existed as the one line connecting me to the world of the real, the world I existed in now, and yet I felt my poetry was increasingly characterized by articulation's failure. Disbelief.

The internality of an experience is that which has very little relation to events as they occur in the real, and so one may never impart the significance of this

experience onto another, one may never come to release it in this way. I could not speak of the things that had happened to me using the language I had learned but I still wrote with the vague hope that it might extend the sense of having originated from some knowable place, presenting a means to speak beyond that reinforced interior I existed within.

Poetry remained for me an unfulfilled belief that I might be able to approach the world of legibility I believed others inhabited.

*

My language continued to expand. Aimé Césaire, Edouard Glissant, and Jean Rhys were writers in whose work I witnessed this expression of ontological authenticity, of a voicing which transcended language's stark limitations. The space that opens within literature being conducive to such a voicing: the realization of a medium that functions beyond language yet remains tied to the ongoingness of being. Through these writers I became aware that there were precedents to the kind of work I hoped to engage with, a means by which one's being, obscured as it might be, could be spoken to. At the same time, I was becoming aware of multiple puncture wounds appearing across the erroneously blank pages I had so far composed.

Not that I want to avoid speaking about my past, but this supposed act of translation, which is not necessarily tied to language's capacities/incapacities, occurs when you don't have a space reserved for language. This space being occupied by an unnameable substitute, a trauma and susceptibility to trauma, which can, at times, assume the place of identity.

Not that I want to avoid speaking about my past, but I am critical of any means by which I may, suddenly, utterly and without effort, become capable of speaking with ease, with a voice (void) corresponding to any situation in an accessible and broadly relatable way. There were times in my life where I spoke only lies so the truth might also become less plausible.

I thought rectifying the source of my feelings of alienation was just a matter of uncovering certain historical truths. I held the misconception that language could act as a medium to speed my progression towards an intensified experiencing of

identity and continuity, conflating the ability to speak of oneself with the kind of consecutiveness I believed as being equal to "belonging." I had seen origin as a potential path preceding the moment you were involuntarily brought into and kept being involuntarily brought into —a path that existed on the other side of a fence I was clinging to, watching those within carry on beautiful conversations using words I couldn't hear, words which would never be able to reach me.

I was thus able to conceptualize this image of connection, yet I remained incapable of knowing how such a state could be achieved. I saw the means of such exploration to be subject to a myriad of self-negating constraints—I only had language to turn to, yet language had proven to be an entirely inadequate venue for this particular kind of seeking.

*

I was brought abruptly into an awareness of relation upon news of the passing of Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite. I found myself struck with grief as I listened through PennSound's archive of his recorded readings. I grieved Brathwaite's departure, and at the same time experienced isolation's sharp, familiar resurgence. The alienation I had been feeling before that moment was akin to the alienation I felt often as a reoccurring absence throughout my life, a feeling which became illumed in stark precision that evening. This recurrence, in which the connection I felt with Brathwaite's work opened to the disconnection I was experiencing in my being, this absence of my own place to speak from or voice through which such a speaking might manifest. It was a feeling that often surfaced upon reading the works of certain writers, often diasporic, often of Caribbean background like myself.

The assumed impossibility: to find a voice that speaks to you from your point of origination, suggesting possible modes of connection and engagement. This initial opening of a pathway or door. Simply, the yielding of this surface, which had previously appeared impenetrable.

Brathwaite's voice forms the exact measure by which his poetry is to be sounded, explored—it expresses itself as directive in this way, requiring that one enter into a position of correspondence. The breakage of lines and words within the work both energizes and destabilizes language through transformative tectonics. This reconstructed world comes to be revived through a process of generous exchange

and recognition. Brathwaite invokes the fractality of a postcolonial landscape before recomposing it into a kaleidoscopic image of crystalline clarity. The material limits of speaking are thus transferred, undone, impeding unchecked assumptions contingent to a postcolonial processing of language. From "Mid/Life":

i am born/thorn w/my navel string/cut

like a cracked egg leaking

As I move in amongst his words, I have the uncanny feeling that I am being seen through.

*

My encounter with Brathwaite's work, brought into sharp outline through the lens of his recent passing, had triggered a shift in my awareness. I wasn't able to immediately grasp what this change signified, hadn't been capable of locating the conditions of this difference in me. I experienced the tangible quality of this connection in tandem with its completely fleeting nature. As is the case with such moments of illumination, impermanence articulates the edges of its duration. Brathwaite's poetics, his voice and riddim, expressed to me the difference between using language to articulate a language of pure externality and the implications of moving past surface into voice. I began to understand the specific nature of my feelings of disconnection in language and poetry, as well as become aware of certain repeating failures in my own writing, which I could not continue to ignore.

Poetry, existing as it is, somehow being apart from, impartial to, the rules of ordinary language—I would not here set it apart from "ordinary" language but say instead that the actuality of any event cannot be adequately accessed through these means. Which is why I had turned to poetics, somehow hoping to cast a similarity, to implement through material means the difficulty and persistence of a perceiving subject. The limits to this access were becoming clear to me. What could be said of a poetics which appears but whose revealing was itself a surface, when peeling back the exteriority of an image served only to reveal another exterior beneath it? What denotes the

authenticity of a poetry whose true measure is that of absence, of a language whose occupation of worlds continues to enforce this intolerable contradiction?

It's been said that trauma does not have a language—this being its difficulty—that the particular language of an essentially unspeakable event continues to escape articulation indefinitely after its conclusion. How is one to delineate the means through which one becomes capable of speaking such an impenetrable dissimilarity? Trauma has no surface that is not a reflection of another surface. Language necessarily fails in the face of this kind of experience.

Being mixed-race of multiple colonized races, I didn't even have claim to the myriad histories of postcolonial traumas present in me. I had been barred from belonging to both the immediate world of origin and from the clarity of knowing, at the very least, the source of the body's terrified dreams and distances. Barred from releasing my personal trauma through an inability to speak, displaced from the traumas of my ancestors whose faces would never appear to me in a photograph, whose names I would never know, whose voices had never spoken to me as a child and could never reach out to me in the present, created an impossibility in the very conditions of my being.

I was beginning to fear I would remain indefinitely incapable of seeing my face as it appeared in its entirety. I again felt the true uselessness of speaking from within a system that denied my existence, whose forms, the only forms I had been given to work with, had been determined by whiteness. The reach and implication of these colonial afterimages continued to present themselves to me in the midst of simply living my life. I still existed within a context that positioned me and others like me as archetypal identities to be represented or spoken for but remained disinterested in engaging with the complexities and departures covalent to such a subjecthood. My being wasn't just tied to the histories of places I originated from; rather, origin was that unknown which I felt kept me from identity.

I kept coming up against the difficult separation of voice and language, between poetics and its vehicle. I felt repulsed by the exclusionary material such a voicing, my voicing, was forced to consist of. The language I knew, whose specificities were inordinately tied to a history of oppression, could not be used to excise my disconnection and lived condition of breakage. I decided, tentatively, to take a hiatus

from poetry. I offered myself a number of valid reasons, but at any rate continuing poetics in this way exhausted me, presenting yet another mirror image upon a series of unreadable surfaces, all of which originated in me.

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In the midst of my disillusionment with poetry, I found myself beginning to reexperience something akin to voice, this speaking I had previously sought in poetry, when I saw "Bend in the Epte River near Giverny" and "Poplars, End of Autumn" by Claude Monet at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the early autumn of 2019. It was (within memory) my first time seeing a Monet painting up close. At the time, I expected the same kind of banality I had encountered before at certain art museums, with their endless hallways of portraiture afforded to the wealthy or delicately prefaced import rooms featuring stolen works of art, not to mention an always-expanding wing devoted to the gallery's regional twentieth century settler artist of choice. Suddenly encountering these paintings by Monet in what was almost a corridor, or at least a space where only a few of the Monet pieces were being exhibited and certainly not an area of prominence, I felt a certain thrill—something about the colour of the light, which was communicated to me as the particular light the sky would have if the dusk itself were to be illuminated, in a sense, if the dusk itself were a material thing that could come to have light cast upon it in this way. More importantly, the colour made sense to me in a way I had been unsuccessfully attempting to express before then using words. Monet's oil paintings, as a representation of idealized European aesthetics, would serve as an introduction to another form that would need reworking if it were to continue to hold meaning to me. Nonetheless, this sudden moment of clearing and comprehension became my introduction to another means of voicing: image.

Painting is a practice of resistances. The oils resist any request to form a clear path into meaning. They melt, stiffen, diffuse. Image, likewise—I have yet to successfully plan a painting preemptively. An image either appears or fails to appear. Painting resists the ease of an unburdened pathway, yet something always gives in the midst of this difficulty. Thoughts and experiences previously obscured by trauma's impassability are transmuted into image with alchemic immediacy. A space opens up in the process of painting, during which time I lose track of subjectivity's distinctions. Ironically, it is at this juncture of psychic sublimation when the relative

awareness of physicality takes on an insistent quality. The body standing before the canvas appears—it is my body.

This manner of voicing is nonetheless fraught with past, even when I am unaware of past's specificities. As in poetics, this language of understanding often acts as a code leading me nowhere. The struggles, indifferences, and difficulties of the image are entirely concealed upon the painting's completion—the faces I have painted do not reveal how many layers of paint have been scrubbed away in error; the illuming effects of cadmium yellow do not reveal the groundwork of shadow beneath it, which gives such a peculiar dimension to its light. I often feel overwhelmed, depressed by the weight of this language that vacillates, seemingly randomly, between impenetrability and revelation. I need it to reflect an image of a truth hidden to me in my daily life, but nothing so incisive is usually what comes to be revealed.

Art practice has, in the past, at times been compared to alchemy. The concept behind alchemy itself is simple: extraordinary transformation is possible with the combination of appropriate ingredients added in relative quantities. That something must be lost in order for something new to come into being. Not lost—given. While in practical application a disreputable concept, the application of an alchemic mindset to art makes sense. There is something alchemical about the space of exchange that occurs when a painting is created, or a poem. There is a gap, an opening, which is created. Anything can come into being through this space, but only after an equal cost has been paid. This is what gives the work its voice, a quality that transcends the space from which it originates. The innermost ground of the self, or what I am here calling *being*, is not absent from the completed work in the sense of having been removed or denied—it must be given away so that something new be able to rise from it. As such, I cannot conceive of poetics or any art practice as being without radical implications: the artwork that arises from the voicing of being originates from a space in which neither being nor voice exist, yet requires both to make the work appear.

The specificity of what I had been seeking in oil painting seemed, in essence, to be the same as whatever it was I had sought in poetry. It was not a matter of juxtaposition: the originary space of both painting and poem were identical.

It was not that I needed to destroy my fraught relationship with language so that voice might become possible, but that this space of separation between voice and language was a material potential through which speaking, or voicing, could become possible. It was from within this gap I had formerly perceived as absence through which voice could transcend the silencing limit of language, of history and all its implications, where the embodiment of authentic voice could become a real possibility. This space I felt in me was generative, an ache composed of future. Its dimensions were not truly those of an absence or unbelonging, but were more like the pause one experiences standing in the midst of a vast field: a field in which one's being is waiting, bending, encountering and being encountered by whatever currents are circulating there.

I've been increasingly drawn to this image of a field. A beginning occurs there: the field is transformed into a meadow lit by dawn. It is a pasture of prairie grass over which a herd of wild animals is grazing. At other times, a large banyan tree exists at the centre of the field, which is beginning to fade beneath the penumbra of a mountain. The field is an abandoned sugar cane plantation, it is a tropical rainforest, it is a deck leading into an apartment in Montréal. The field nourishes swathes of freely growing hibiscus. The field is a scene from a film, it is a distance I've crossed, it is the clearing I've arrived to in the midst of a dream.

At any rate, this field is spacious.

Hello World: Protocol

June Tang

I'm submitting my work permit application.

Hello world,

We were told we could double our social interactions mindfully, but what does it mean to be mindful socializing with someone when you have no social and emotional belonging to this land?

I came here to study, but I want to stay for much more. A work permit, permanent residence card, and eventually, Canadian citizenship. The navy blue passport—a tiny book with laminated paper and golden inscribed texts—holds in itself a future of immense possibility, and also a reminder of my father.

"There is no future for you in Vietnam."

The form is a simple 6 pages, the first page consisting of facts I've had to write over and over again, a few lines that theoretically could sum up who I am as a person, even if almost half of them are not applicable to me. Unable to write my feelings out, I write out these concrete and "permanent" facts: my name, address, study permit number—one by one they fill the blank spaces of my work permit application.

The privileged life given to me by my parents allows me to answer "no" to questions pertaining to the status of prisoner, veteran, or refugee, and affords me the convenience of having to do much less work. The permanent truth is that, up until now, I have been sheltered. I might have had to do my own chores, cook my own meals—tasks I feel lucky to have learned to do so well—but I still lived in the embrace of my parents. They brought me here, and that's an unchangeable fact.

The language I feel most comfortable speaking to you in is English. I apologize more than the average Canadian, though this doesn't mean I'm more polite. I came

into adulthood here, making me, in some ways, more attached to this place than my birthplace where I lived for almost two decades. My experiences have been marked by drastic change, and yet I seek permanence.

Physical documents of citizenship and residency should not, technically, alter who I am emotionally and mentally. And yet, on the path of gathering documents as if they were checkpoints in the video game of life, I anticipate bits of my old self being torn apart. Even though my academic achievements, perseverance, and independence should be enough, a piece of paper that says I deserve to be here, that I am no less than my peers, will only come after years and years of living and working in Canada. Surely that amount of time will have taken parts of me away, replacing them with bits of Canadian-ness.

Goodbye, World.

Hello world,

When I was a kid in high school, I looked up to designers like celebrities—stars I could never reach. Flipping through a book of typeface, my fingers tracing the strokes of the letters, I would think to myself, "These people must have the coolest job in the world." Little did I know that to pursue design is to become a tool for capitalism, in the most poetic and visually attractive way possible.

Why is it that an international student gets charged 3 times, sometimes more, the amount of a domestic student's tuition? Is my existence here so demanding that it requires this absurd amount of money to support? Why do parents pay this incredible fee to send their children off in the first place? To a country no better than their own, a place claiming to be the centre of the world and yet one that fails some of its inhabitants so profoundly?

Paying to be here, getting paid to work here, I find myself caught up in a business model that makes it hard for me to situate myself. While I struggle with my own identity as a "settler," I consider worlds that exist beyond me, and wonder if I will ever grasp their complexities. Why am I here for a "First World" education, when all I have learned so far is how to leave other worlds behind?

Three Poems

Dallas Hunt

born under punches (in billings)

welcome to the white literary arts festival: be palatable, tasty, even be legible—yes this is one of those poems about disciplinary relegation, circulation, certitude

you ask for tea,
preferably red rose,
but they give you coffee.
just what you wanted:
stained yellow teeth
barking histories of violence
jittery utterances of accusal
how embarrassing:
at least suck
on a breath mint
when you belch your miseries
crest white strips
would go a long way

a "question" from the audience an appeal to objectivity— "account for yourself" (i.e. count yourself among the grateful ndns to exist in this space) count yourself lucky to exist generally but also count yourself—the bureau of indian affairs would like to know where/when/what you are

sit at the back of the room by the garbage can during the introduction of "our esteemed authors" this place was yours long before you arrived here detritus but now your work can keep you company. company is hard to keep in spaces like these

welcome to the white literary arts festival, there's a swag bag in your hotel room addressed to you please find included: a power bar
a poster
two candles
and a local review of
your book,
title misspelled
the worst image of you
on the planet accompanying,
and an appeal to attend your
event: "best indigenous artist"—
he's delighted to be here,
we promise,
even if
it hurts.

kôhkom freedom

freedom is selecting the premium cable package bundle even though you can't afford it, and even though all you watch are the film channels and TLC, falling asleep to John Hughes movie marathons or reruns of 90 day fiancé

freedom is when the empty fuel light shines bright on your dashboard, but you drive to work anyway, lifting your foot off the gas pedal as you careen downhill, momentum

carrying you forward

freedom is a phone bill that will never be paid, but you call your niece anyway, to check to see if she'll come over to visit, gossip, and mop your floors for twenty dollars

freedom is a bingo dabber that never runs out, because when it does you remove the top and pour coffee in, to mix with the ink

freedom is a debt you can't escape yet you charge another slurpee to your overdraft credit card cause it's sizzling outside, and raspberry blue is your favourite flavour, and they have it this time of year (and fuck them anyways)

Cree word of the day

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@Dallas_Hunt Jul 6, 2020
onipahtâkewak: "murderers"
@Dallas_Hunt May 1, 2020
opiniyâwewipîsim: "May (the egg laying moon/month)"
@Dallas_Hunt Dec 9, 2019
minihkwe: "to drink"
@Dallas_Hunt Oct 4, 2019
macâtisiw: "he is evil"
@Dallas_Hunt Sep 1, 2019
onôcihitowipîsim: "September (the mating moon/month)"
@Dallas_Hunt Aug 18, 2019
api: "to sit"
@Dallas_Hunt Jul 1, 2019
kimotiskwak: "thieves"
@Dallas_Hunt Nov 17, 2018
osâwisiw: "it is orange"
@Dallas_Hunt May 31, 2018
nikisowâsin: "I am angry"
@Dallas_Hunt May 13, 2018
nikâwiy: "my mother"; kikâwiy: "your mother"
@Dallas_Hunt Feb 12, 2018
namoya kwayasmayitôtamowin: "injustice"
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The form of the kayak came from its function as a hunting boat

Mark Igloliorte & Clint Burnham

In April 2020, Mark Igloliorte, an interdisciplinary artist of Inuit ancestry, was scheduled to visit my English graduate class at Simon Fraser University's Burnaby campus. The COVID-19 pandemic had cancelled all in-person visits, so we did this by video conference. Thanks to Mark for the time and insightful discussion and brilliant art, and to Rawia Inaim for the transcription. — Clint Burnham

Clint Burnham Let's start talking about your painting "Kayak is Inuktitut for Seal Hunting Boat," which I was really happy to see in February 2020, when I was in Winnipeg. It's amazing, and I especially like the work's dimensions, its size. I first saw it on Tania Willard's Instagram in the summer of 2019, and seeing your painting that way, it mimicked the cultural genre that the painting references—sort of a meme. But before we talk about genre or medium, can you talk about how the painting is an intervention into what we think of a kayak, especially here on the West Coast, a kind of lifestyle boat for settlers, retirees paddling around the Gulf Islands. Because your take is more complicated than that, presenting what is also a boat for the seal hunt, the very activity that is also, perhaps, disavowed or reviled by that same kind of leisure-class of people. So, I want to know if you want to talk about that.

Mark Igloliorte Yeah, yeah, for sure. One thing all kayakers have in common, that I see people respond to, and that's in keeping with the kayak, is this idea of sustainability. I see hunting as an intrinsically sustainable practice because there are so many Indigenous laws and understandings about hunting, about never taking more than you need, which speak to sustainability. The kayak as a hunting vessel is part of that, even if just in terms of a human-powered vessel. So, I think that there's some alignment there, an appreciation, between all of these groups of people. The separation that I'm trying to reconnect is that the form of the kayak came from its function as a hunting boat. When I made this painting at Wintec (Waikato Institute of Technology / Te Kuratini o Waikato, New Zealand), where the RAMP Gallery is housed, I was working very closely with the design technician, Martin Page, who was very helpful, and being in that design space, I saw a text on the wall, "form follows function." I was thinking about this kayaking work that I was doing and thinking about the precolonial function of the kayak as a hunting boat and its form, this agile boat for an individual or a hunter, and that everything about the craft was manifested towards this function. So, the idea of having a meme was about communicating that message directly.

I was doing a different work with the kayak around that time, learning how to do an Eskimo roll, and making that video was part of this project. So I was spending a lot of time physically engaging with the kayak as an embodied practice. At the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia, I noticed a mini qamutiik, a sled on the back of one of these kayaks, and I realized, "oh, that's the dolly," because we have these wheel dollies for getting the kayaks around on the land. And then I realized this is obviously what you're gonna use to get the kayak out in the winter too and you need a form of caddy to get it out to the edge of the ice. Looking at the different kayaks,

including the miniature kayaks, on display at the MOA, some of which are a hundred years old, very close to that precolonial culture—and you know the connections between the makers of those would be so close to that precolonial culture—the kayaks were just covered in harpoons, three in the front, two in the back, and they were different shapes because they had different functions, and that just spoke so loudly to me about the original intention of the kayaks as a hunting boat.

And so as we're moving ahead in universities talking about Indigenization and decolonization, I was wondering, what would a decolonization or Indigenization of the kayak look like? And that would be, I think, first acknowledging and then returning to this original function of the boat. And I think an embodied practice, such as hunting from a kayak, is part of the decolonization and Indigenization that I'd like to see. I take part in a lot of these discussions in our university and a lot of the times it's on a theoretical level, or how we're going to change the way we relate to one another in the classroom, and all that stuff is excellent. But what I'm really concerned with are these physical manifestations and thinking about these Indigenous ways of being a part of a landscape and having this sustainable focus, and that gets me really excited.

CB Yeah. And just to talk about something that doesn't get you as excited, which is Indigenization or decolonization in the classroom or in the university setting. In early 2020, I was at a talk you led at Emily Carr University, and I wonder what you think of the argument that it shouldn't just be up to Indigenous faculty to initiate these conversations, to carry the burden, and that more non-Indigenous faculty should also be participating. I mean, there were non-Indigenous faculty there, but it seemed to be that it was up to you and your colleague as Indigenous faculty to lead this discussion. This event seemed to be an example of one more thing, one more committee you have to be on, one more mentorship you have to do, and so on.

MI Well, I mean for myself, I see that event as part of my role as "Indigenous Pedagogy Coordinator" at Emily Carr. But for that academic work, for myself, I made a point of ensuring that I would be compensated, and thankfully there's the leadership at Emily Carr to support that. I think in terms of the work being shared amongst faculty, I was really grateful for that talk because there was a follow-up one as well, and these discussions are not just for the Indigenous faculty—it's incumbent on all to pick this up and to figure out how they're going to do it, and then also, figure out how to seek guidance and be respectful. But the onus is on the individual faculty to incorporate this work or to change how they do it in their curriculum.



Mark Igloliorte *Kayak Is Inuktituk For Seal Hunting Boat* 2019 acrylic on unstretched canvas Image credit: Holly Marie Russell Courtesy of the artist and The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, Newfoundland and Labrador

When I first started going to university in the nineties, there was so much momentum around feminism, but it seemed to be coming off of the seventies and eighties feminism movement. From that time going forward any art class that did not discuss female artists or LGBTQ artists—it would have been a very large and glaring omission. Presently I feel it's similar for Indigenous artists. We need to be included in the conversation, especially in an academic setting. And so I don't think it's just about inclusion, because, as the Indigenous people of this continent, including and incorporating these different points of view is essential.

CB Cool, thank you. I want to come back to your art and I wanted to stay another minute or so with the kayak painting. I'm looking at it right now and the ways in which the painting itself is almost a diagram, visually, in terms of a field of it. On the far left—you have the point of a kayak pointed down, and then you have one slogan (KAYAK IS INUKTITUT) moving across the top, and then you have a centre, and maybe it's as if someone is in the kayak, and then to the right, with the line drawing quality showing how bundled the harpoons and spears would be on the kayak. That's going on, on the one hand, but then on the other, it's on unstretched canvas, which, I mentioned to you in the email I sent yesterday, suggests to me the African American artist, Kerry James Marshall—

MI Absolutely.

CB So, some kind of intervention into the quality of the support, of the material support. And so those aspects of it as a fine art work exist in a productive tension with the meme quality or the digital vernacular quality of the painting, for instance the placement of text on top and bottom. And I'll just say one thing I was thinking about the meme world, Instagram, social media, etc. is that this can be a place of these hot takes, these ill-considered takes, you know, naming, blaming and shaming, and cancel culture, all of those kind of things, where someone is just going to say, "oh, I'm vegan, I'm not going to support seal hunting"—

MI Oh, sure.

CB And so that's the sort of intervention I saw your painting as being engaged with.

MI Yeah, absolutely. And just to start with the vegan point. I feel there is a large opportunity for greater understanding between especially vegans and Indigenous people. And the problem that I see, when I was on Twitter a lot, I am not there so much

anymore, but the thing is that the most visible anti-Indigenous groups that I've seen online have been vegans. At the same time, I feel there's another text piece brewing in my mind—I haven't sorted it out, but it's something along the lines of "you're not vegan if you don't support Indigenous hunting rights." Also, I feel growing up in Newfoundland and Labrador, where hunting is not exclusively Indigenous, that hunters generally have a respect for sustainability. There is a subset of vegan people that have a black and white approach to this, and then there are other people who understand that sustainability and hunting go hand in hand. So, I don't know how to suss this out. There's a couple of different things going on—we have people that are identifying as vegan that are harassing Indigenous people in online spaces, and although they are identifying as part of this group, they obviously don't represent all vegans.

There needs to be some way to parse out this type of contention, and what I would love to see is for vegans to step up and guide their own community. And if they see people piling on Indigenous people, to speak up. And you do see this, you see people saying, "Hey, I'm vegan, but I get it, I respect Indigenous rights and the sustainability of hunting." And so, it's just a tricky thing. I don't think it's appropriate for people to identify as vegan and then to harass Indigenous people online; that is inappropriate. So, in a way—we have vegans that are appropriate and vegans that are inappropriate in terms of their relationship to hunting.

CB I think the distinction is important. And then there's that whole celebrity culture moment with Ellen DeGeneres at the 2014 Oscars, taking her anti-seal-hunt selfie, which was basically an ad for the new Samsung phone.

MI Yup.

CB And so Indigenous artists or Inuit artists like Maureen Gruben have made work about this, and Tanya Tagaq, as well.

MI And I think what's difficult or insidious about it is organizations such as PETA, although they may do good work in other ways, they promote a very black and white way of thinking, and use that to garner funds, which actually leads to very generous retirement packages for their leadership, while you have many Indigenous people scraping by in their communities.

It's really upsetting but to move on, I want to acknowledge the work of Kerry James Marshall, which you brought up earlier, and that idea of using unstretched canvas. I have to give it up to a few of my students that gave a presentation on Kerry James Marshall.

In their presentation, they had cited Kerry saying that he works on unstretched canvas because he feels a sense of urgency for making the work, so making as much as possible, making it as large as possible, finding the means for it to travel. Large canvasses are very cumbersome in terms of managing and so unstretched canvas becomes a lot easier. What I hope to convey with what I'm saying—the message I'm putting into that material—is that I feel a sense of urgency about it. There's a message that I want to communicate and that feels very important to me. And that goes on a banner quite naturally. I was thinking about the congruity between a banner and a meme, and it's about communication, getting a message out to the world and communicating it to people who encounter it. And as much as there are negative memes, which you brought up earlier—I do appreciate when I'm online and I see a meme that gives me an opportunity to rethink my position on a matter. I've found myself changing my mind about how I relate to the world or how I relate to other people from a meme. I feel the potential of it, so that's where I want to work with it and hopefully change some other people's minds or give them something to think about.

And just about the composition with the kayaks: the source of the imagery is a drawing I made of one of the model kayaks at the MOA. I wasn't quite sure how it was going to be used in the drawing, so I made a number of drawings while I was up there. But I wanted to focus on the harpoons that were on the kayak. And for me the solution was using repetition and having it shown on different parts of the canvas. So, there's the hunter in the centre, and on either side there's the repeated kayak, and you can clearly see the harpoons on both sides. And I wanted the opportunity to represent the model, but at life scale, so I made the scale of the kayak the same scale as the kayak that I own, which is just about eighteen feet long, and I stretched the image to eighteen feet long and projected it as you see on the work.

CB Nice, yeah, that's great. In terms of some other kinds of works that you are also doing, resurgent work as people like Leanne Betasamosake Simpson or Glen Coulthard might phrase it, and I think they might—the sealskin neck pillow is pretty awesome in terms of the E.U. travel ban on the trade and exchange of seal products. So, you actually took that—used that neck pillow when you flew to New Zealand for your show. Were you worried it would get confiscated in the airport?

MI Oh yeah, absolutely. I thought I was going to be in a windowless room, you know, with some customs agents, but that never happened. I basically just got waved through. But I do think about this international travel ban, how that was the animal activists' strategy for curtailing a seal harvest in Newfoundland, and how it had detrimental

effects for Inuit communities. What I wanted was to think about an object that permeates these international borders quite often. And to use the sealskin as part of Inuit culture that looks into the future, to share how it thinks about where sealskins can go or where we are going as a people, across the globe, and how Inuit can contribute to that or how there could be a market for an object like that.

One of the things that I have always been troubled by in terms of animal rights activists is that they'll be against the seal hunt because it's commercial and because it's killing animals. But then they'll make an exception for "traditional and Indigenous practices," you know. And they'll also use language in their outgoing material in terms of "barbarism" or "outdated practices." And that stuff makes me really uncomfortable because I feel it doesn't show respect, it doesn't show a holistic respect for Indigenous peoples. It's more of a begrudging acknowledgement that this is an important part of the culture but doesn't acknowledge that there was never anything wrong with those practices and that there continues to be nothing wrong with it. The sense that I get is that in tying it to tradition there is the hope people will move away from seal hunting or that it will become such a minority activity that it would be insignificant. That attitude does not show respect for Indigenous practices. And so, I wanted to make a product that, unlike a garment, wouldn't be tied to tradition but was thoroughly contemporary and modern. I'm hoping to push back against this placement of Indigenous practices in the past, that tie it to tradition. Working with, say, air travel would make it much more forward-looking.

CB And also the neck pillow is this kind of a modern device for our bodies being caught in these weird little compartments during air travel where we can't actually move around the way we want to move around. So, it's this sort of ergonomic adaptation to this kind of constraint.

MI Yeah.

CB I want to finish up our discussion by talking about *Eskimo Roll*, another kayak piece, and a performance, I think. There's a very kind of Beckett "try again fail again" aspect to it, where it's not just showing you doing the roll successfully because you're Inuit so you have the technique. But also, it seems you're using the word "Eskimo" in the title as a strategic thing. So I wonder if you want to talk about those two aspects, or whatever others, of that work.

MI Yeah, well, I think that including the failure very much comes out of skateboarding video language. That piece was created to be paired with a skateboarding video, which



Mark Igloliorte *Seal Skin Neck Pillow* 2019 seal skin Image credit: Holly Marie Russell Courtesy of the artist and The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, Newfoundland and Labrador



Mark Igloliorte *Eskimo Roll* 2019 still from video loop Filmed and edited by Navarana Igloliorte Courtesy of the artist

was part of the exhibition *Boarder X*, and the connection that I see there. Both kayaks and skateboards are individual vehicles, but it's really a community that teaches us how to use them. So, as much as they are individual vehicles, they're part of a community.

Being a teenager and learning all of these different skateboard tricks and figuring out ways to jump down stairs with the board flipping under me and catching it with my feet and doing all these things which I was very proud to do and very excited to do... Learning those different skills gave me the confidence to say to myself, "I can learn how to do anything. I can learn how to paint, I can learn how to be a professor, and I can learn how to take up my Indigenous practices and be successful with them." And so, I bought a kayak as part of my research when I first got on faculty at Emily Carr, and I didn't know what I was going to do with it, but I knew that if I set things up, then interesting things would happen. And so, I bought the kayak and I was at a social gathering and just chatting with people about it. And right from the start my friend Faran said: "I kayak! I taught myself how to do an Eskimo roll." I said to him, "I would love for you to teach me." And so, we were going to this pool in Kitsilano on Friday nights where you can do kayaking skills, and you know, it's a really awkward thing to be upside down in the water, strapped to a boat. And even though it took me around six trips in order to learn how to do it, I never doubted that I would learn it. Just as I taught myself how to do all these different things with skateboarding—or rather my friends helped me learn how to do all these things with skateboarding—I was confident that Faran would be able to help me learn how to do an Eskimo roll.

And so, for the name, it is a peculiar thing in that "Eskimo" isn't a name that Inuit would use for themselves. It was a name that was imposed on them. At the same time, where I see a strength or power in the name is that it acknowledges that the maneuver is a precolonial one, that it comes from a certain group of people, and that there's all this Indigenous knowledge and ways of being in the maneuver itself. I myself don't find Eskimo to be that offensive. I do know that other people do and that there's hurt there and there's harm there. So I do feel a little bit weird about the naming of it, yet I also feel in that naming the possession and acknowledgement of a precolonial communication. This knowledge is of the Inuit, it existed before a colonial worldview, and all those things I find valuable enough to keep the title as it is.

CB I love that walkthrough. I'm not—this is my first time doing a Zoom meeting, so I don't know if we're gonna get cut off at thirty minutes exactly, which we are at within a minute or something. So just in case that happens, Mark, I'm just gonna thank you...

MI —No problem.

 ${\sf CB}\,$...for the time and for your generosity. I hope to see you once the lockdown is over and we can have a coffee or something.

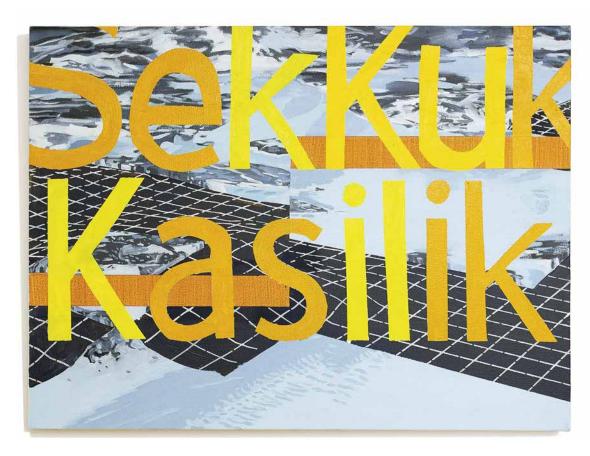
MI Yeah, that'll be great. I really appreciate you and all your students taking the time to have a look at my practice, and then think about the different things that I'm bringing up. ■

Mark Igloliorte Traverse

Image credit: Holly Marie Russell All images courtesy of the artist and Marion Scott Gallery



Mark Igloliorte Pulâttik Angiggak 2019 oil on canvas 101.4 x 76.4 cm



Mark Igloliorte Kasilik SekKuk 2019 oil on canvas 76.4 x 57 cm



Mark Igloliorte $\ \textit{kavisilik Uvinik}\ 2019\ oil\ on\ canvas\ 76.4 \times 57\ cm$

Siku Allooloo Akia

Following pages:

Siku Allooloo Akia (installation view) 2018 sealskin on canvas

Presented as part of Hexsa'am: To Be Here Always at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, The University of British Columbia, 2019

Image credit: Rachel Topham Photography Courtesy of the artis

N. P. 3

Deep and strong and slaut, my father, an eachs ocean. No. of him, but adrift The people from Band Jalet, he says " of means fromediations a system of the forest."

Somethings we find the current
trades and wibroken like those encoding has
but mostly we are swept by amassed brakenness and the " called her thet" he says, and I break I for us has akunya been subsurface

g two com Communication for us to Love and resonance augmented through

Whing is like positing into flyind danking to world of life and complex actions and complex of the wall complex.

o wall the stand down and cotumed to all my life to down, and toying to cotum to y afrest of causing poin

The time, comothing rapids thole like whate meantly hen people from Rad More every of eatherthen they got homenck—that's what they say the mountains

Byot end the mountains

so what is her name. I teld them t leland is very beautiful. he said Myou momentary,

Like water over whales as they evel beak under see

the other side parning how to eac, I em s art was last, what was a

Felt Encryption

Siku Allooloo

It's a dialogue with my father, spirit world and myself

Reaching back across distance dislocation, despair to recoup what's been lost

>- as an *arnaq* >-

With memory, genetic memory landscape, language, naming ::: time capsules ::: that both house and restore the connections

An attempt to speak in foreign language english, writing, emotion... to a residential school survivor who mostly never speaks

Attempt to express several things we have never been able to say

 $\underline{Y}_{||}\underline{Y}_{||}\underline{Y}_{||}\underline{Y}$

This image washed up like debris from a wreckage long before my time

I held it up like an old slide saw the beautiful place I once knew as home

Blood memory in aged hues ...something about my mother ...buried in my father

She passed when I was young He left when I was much younger

Still, that ground is my birthright I would have to cross the void

He met me there Dug up enough words to tell me the meaning

"the other side" / that beautiful mountain seascape of our home

The secret memory that kept him alive when he was taken away

His beautiful silent resistance

...the name he gave my mother

The other side of our void

Sealskin

In lieu of Inuktitut

In lieu of drowning in all we cannot breach

In hope ancestors at least receive my felt encryption from the distance in which I've been cast

(like that planet they found, in outer orbit named for our goddess transformer, bottom of the sea)

Especially for her

Sealskin

to wrap our feeble, terrified hope heartache, desire

in soft warm protection we ourselves never had

Twilight Zone of the Tongue: Vignettes of Translingualism

Fan Wu

Four Provocations

Transformation is intrinsic to language. The inner processes of language are *transitional*: in the jumps between the neuronal sensation and the utterance; in the silences that both interrupt communication and make it possible; in language's quavering between sound, tone, and meaning. Language is not a stable entity and is constituted by nothing but its dynamic transformations: this is the atomic structure of what we will name *translingualism*.

Translingualism understands that language is not an abstract idea, but a pattern of experience within language. It feels out the stitches between the different discourses that compose a natural language; it is the energy that allows us to pass from a lover's idiom (promissory) to a labourer's idiom (pragmatic) to a cat owner's idiom (cooing) in the span of minutes. Every idiom within language has its own grammars, syntaxes, and ideals.

Translingualism challenges hegemonic monolingualism from within. Under capitalism, a global, techno-bureaucratic form of monolingualism attempts to commandeer language by bending it to the teleologies of market value, efficiency, and advertising. But monolingualism is susceptible to internally splitting off into creolizations, hybridities, and dialects that forge their own desires and aims. So English, for example, is not a language, but a tool with which to build real, live, active languages. Translingualism is an act of resistance in language against the forces that would narrow its potentials for the sake of consolidating power.

Translingualism affirms that we are all *mono*lingual (because all the languages and idioms we speak make up a continuum that is the singular language of our

subjectivity) and that we are not even *mono*lingual (because no language properly *belongs* to us, and neither language itself nor our subjective grasp of it ever coheres into a monolingual "oneness").

My Own Private Degenerating Mandarin

I left China when I was four years old. I have no memories of China, only a few photographs of the farms I grew up on with my grandmother, and those photographs have supplied me with the retroactive illusion of memory. (Those farmlands are now being seized by the government and turned into high-rise developments—but the horror of contemporary China is a story for another day). In one photo, I'm posing with two parakeets, beaming from ear to ear in my Charlie Brown-esque knit vest. Later my mother would laugh at me when I asked for the story behind this photo. She told me I'd wrung the necks of the parakeets out of curiosity about my own strength.

At age four, one already has a sense of language, a grasp of syntax and a burgeoning base vocabulary. But the brain is still pliable enough to pick up a new language fairly quickly and forge what essentially seems like a "native" competence with that language. Personally, I have no trace of an accent, nor any strangeness of syntax; the only "tell" that fellow "bilingual" speakers have noticed is that I pronounce "sure" like "是," the Chinese word for "being." My parents were conflicted as pedagogues: they wanted me to learn Mandarin but at the same time needed to learn English themselves, so our household ended up speaking a blended Chinglish (hardly uncommon in immigrant households) where we'd sub in and out of languages depending on our comfort levels. "你可以今天不用 computer 行吗?" I grew up flung deep into translingual constellations, and this interweaving hybridity taught me so much about the inherent flexibility of language-systems and their openness to play.

The sounds and rhythms of Mandarin are forgotten nostalgias that haunt me; in my thoughts I still count numbers, work multiplication tables, and identify fruits in Chinese. My English is still half-lit by Mandarin, even as my real knowledge of it has faded into a kindergartener's set of nouns. The rhythms of the Tang poems that my grandparents recited for me still wend their way into how I write poetry, and

in the very musicality of my inner ear, Mandarin composes my sonic unconscious. The language I speak, English, where I feel myself to have the most communicative power, is founded on a loss whose resonant traces shape it in ways that exceed my knowledge and are buried deep in my intuitions:

床前明月光,疑是地上霜。 举头望明月,低头思故乡。

Li Bai's children's lullaby, perhaps the most popular poem in Mandarin, is one such resonant trace. Here's my best attempt to render its lilt of perfect simplicity into English:

before the bed a moonbeam's thrust moonlight wet the ground like frost raise your head to see that moon lower it to know what's lost

(adapted from my Storm Work: An Icarus Opera in Three Acts)

These Mandarin melodies that hum beneath my hearing leads me to assert, in places where one announces one's identity: I'm not bilingual, nor trilingual, I'm translingual. For the translingual subject, questions orbit around the daily practices of self-identification: How traumatic is the loss of a language? What kind of development is arrested when the mother tongue's been frozen in time? Why is it that I can't bring myself to sit down and learn Mandarin properly—what am I holding on to in my incomplete, perversely *improper* understanding of it?

Pound I

The translingual has made a traitor of me. My ostensible body is Chinese but I mostly reached a sense of "Chineseness" through the Western tradition's fascination with it. *Portrait of an Asian orientalist*. Barthes's passionate idealization of Japanese language and Zen culture, Pound's praise of the Chinese ideogram and its potential for poetry: their fascination felt kin to mine, spurred as it was by the sense of an

irreducible difference entwined with an essential lack. Something in the Other held a truth that was missing from their local, Western context. They found something in Japan or China that their souls were missing in the West, just as I saw their illuminated hunger as the bridge between myself and the homeland I had given up.

Barthes's and Pound's romanticizations of Eastern poetics were deeply sincere, thoroughly researched, and *fruitful*; texts like Barthes's *Empire of Signs* and Pound's *Cathay* were highly influential in generating East-West literary transcultural exchange. If we read them with a critical eye—for these are not faultless texts, and are riddled with their fair share of misunderstandings and essentializations of Eastern culture—we can understand not what defines either Eastern or Western culture but the peculiar transcultural and relational space between them.

Pound worked within an unstable translingual space because he didn't read much Chinese; rather, he used transliterated texts by Ernest Fennellosa as rough guidelines to produce his idiosyncratic English "translations." Here's "Huang Niao" ("Yellow Bird") from the *Book of Classics*, one of the earliest recorded compilations of Chinese folk poetry:

This is James Legge's literal version:

Yellow bird, yellow bird, Do not settle on the oaks, Do not eat my grand millet. The people of this country, I cannot dwell with. I will return, I will go back, Back to my uncles.

And here's Pound's rendition:

Yaller bird, let my corn alone,
Yaller bird, let my crawps alone,
These folks here won't let me eat,
I wanna go back whaar I can meet
the folks I used to know at home,
I got a home an'I wanna' git goin'.

Yalla' bird, let my trees alone,
Let them berries stay whaar they'z growin',
These folks here ain't got no sense,
can't tell them nothing without offence,
Yalla' bird, lemme, le'mme go home.

I gotta home an'I wanna git goin'.

Yalla' bird, you stay outa dem oaks,
Yalla' bird, let them crawps alone,
I just can't live with these here folks,
I gotta home and I want to git goin'.
To whaar my dad's folks still is a-growin'.

Pound transmogrifies these Chinese folk songs into poems composed of patchwork elements from the history of English poetry. He renders the seven-line Chinese poem into two sestets and a quatrain, expanding the rhythms of the poem into an English folk song structure. His vernacular doubles down on the folk song feel, as he transcribes the phonetics of rural American speech—with its own minor variations, like between "yaller" and "yalla"—into a sing-songy cornfield rhythm. The poem's musical urgency matches its message of hostility and a pained nostalgia for the homeland. Pound's deep knowledge of English poetry's history, from its high-cultural intertextuality to its low-cultural vernacular speech, allows him to forge a resonant link between 8th century BCE China and the 19th century American South. He lets the ancient Chinese poem roam over the surface of English poetics, searching for correspondence in affect rather than, as in Legge's version, communication of bare meaning.

In Pound's example, translingual translation expresses not the original text itself, but the crosscultural *act of encounter* between the original and the translation. Such an act necessarily records the imprint of the translingual subject who makes two languages meet in the unformed, undefined middle space between the two languages. No longer a mere translator, Pound is a spiritual medium for the poem. Certainly this is a speculative act, leaping as it does into the abyss of the incommensurable to try to match idioms between languages. But the attempt is inspirational to me, as it passes the spirit of the original Chinese through the prism of English to create a trans-temporal, trans-geographic poem that glints with the original poem's energy. A translingual poetics releases us from the limitations of *accurate meaning*, and allows experimentation, failure, and the unknown to seep into the translated text.

We can be inspired by Pound's avowal of non-mastery as a creative engine, yet at the same time wary of his power as a monolithic English poet who obscures the other via his own vast capacities. This past year I worked with the Koffler Gallery to teach poetry to Mandarin-speaking seniors. It was one of the toughest gigs of my life, especially when I was tasked with live-translating their stories into English, the speed and stakes of which lit up a part of my translingual brain that had long been dormant. But this challenge made it invigorating, as we supplied missing lines in each other's English or Mandarin, bouncing our respective expertises against each other until we found an sufficiently calibrated middle ground. This experience taught me that we can extend a more truly collaborative ethos into Pound's project, one where self and other can interface in the awkward limbo zone of the translingual.

Pound II

I can't blame my parents for not knowing what I desired in language: not the pragmatic, not business Mandarin, not the language naturalized for communication; but its capacity for nuance, its enigmatic formalism: Mandarin's intrinsic aesthetics of elisions and condensation. I found Mandarin classes boring not because they were dull, but because the version of the language we were learning was intended for eventual capitalistic use in the gleaming world of global economics. Mandarin was just a substitute hegemonic monolingualism for English.

Thirteen years old at the back of Mandarin class and the boy beside me whipped out a porno video on his phone and asked me "is she getting pounded in the pussy or the ass?" I hesitated for three seconds, and this moment of hesitation was sufficient signal for this bully: "then you must be a fucking faggot." I felt then a rending jolt of fear: I hadn't yet come out (I was too young to even have formulated an identity to come out as) and yet this boy saw right through me, or at least he *named* me for what I was, even if his cruelty wasn't even sensitive to my sexuality. Worst of all, he was far better at Chinese than I was, having left China later than I did (at age eight). I resented that his swinish machismo didn't translate into incompetence. So while I struggled in every aspect of learning the language, he treated the whole thing as a joke; he lacked all the internal mechanisms that made me—assimilation-hungry as I was back then—resist Mandarin with grit teeth. I knew then what I couldn't have expressed: that my inability to internalize Mandarin was the most painful kind of stupidity, because it also served to sever me from my ancestrality.

That day I felt a kind of negative ecstasy, one that fuses two unlike things together on the basis of shame: homophobia and the unintelligible shadow of a supposed home, China, Chineseness. In my inability to answer the question "pussy or ass" quickly enough I let slip that I was outside the discourse of easy heterosexuality; that I could not read these vulgar signs. In my inability to answer the teacher's questions about the meaning of 骄傲 or 宿舍 I let slip that I could not live up to my own supposed skin; that I could not read these profane signs. I struggled to "pass" into the headspace of Mandarin just as I could not "pass" as a straight boy, at least by this bully's fatal definition.

Schizophrenic Tongues

Louis Wolfson is an American author and schizophrenic whose book *Le Schizo et les Langues* details his virtuosic translingual attempt to avoid ever hearing English. He writes (referring to himself in the third person):

However, since it was not at all possible to not hear his birth language, he tried to develop the means to convert the words (especially certain ones that he found very annoying) almost instantaneously into foreign words each

time they would penetrate his consciousness, despite his efforts to not perceive them. He did this in order to imagine that he wasn't spoken to in this damn language, his mothertongue, English. In fact he often cultivated sharp reactions that caused him pain upon listening, if he could not quickly convert, or to destroy in spirit in a constructive manner, the vocables into words that were in foreign languages, these vocables that he had just heard in that godforsaken language, English.

(trans. Nicholas Hauck & Fan Wu)

In order to listen to English such that English is no longer itself, but nonetheless still comprehensible, Wolfson took the component syllables from English and distributed them across four other languages. Gilles Deleuze explains Wolfson's procedure in his introduction to the book:

His scientific procedure is the following: given a word in the mothertongue, he finds a foreign word with a similar meaning but also having sounds or phonemes in common (preferably in French, German, Russian, or Hebrew, the four main languages studied by the author). A random phrase from the mothertongue will thus be analyzed in its phonetic movements and elements, in order to be converted AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE into a sentence of one or many foreign languages at once... Thus is the general procedure. For example, the phrase don't trip over the wire! becomes tu'nicht (German) trebucher (French) uber (German) eth he (Hebrew) zwirn (German).

(trans. Nicholas Hauck & Fan Wu, emphases mine)

Wolfson's psychosis wasn't "merely" a mental illness—it was a virtuosic manifestation of what a polyglot mind can do, indeed must do, to protect itself from the pain of English. Translingualism for him is a coping mechanism against the intense, unbearable psychic pressure of his mother's speech, which infected any English he heard. The *speed* of this live translation—"AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE"—is essential to fending off the pain, and this speed demanded mastery of Wolfson's four chosen languages: French, German, Hebrew, Russian. Wolfson swaps back and

forth between those four languages to try to keep both considerations of *sound* and *meaning* in play, thus preserving everything about the English original—except its Englishness. The unconscious of a language is composed of other languages, and Wolfson shatters the monolingual surface of his mother's English to let the other always-already interconnected languages show through.

(I feel bad translating Wolfson into English, back into the language that tormented him, the literal mother-tongue that was the tongue-lashing his mother gave him, that led him to flee that doomed English for foreign shores.)

Wolfson is undoubtedly a singular case study for psychoanalysis and the linguistic histories of psychosis. But I take a more general lesson from Wolfson: there's something unbearable about language. (There's something especially unbearable about English, the language of power *par excellence* in the West.) Don't you ever have the impulse to abandon language and the burden of comprehensibility? Language's staunch ambiguities, its capacity for chaos, its rampant associations: all of these risk being lost in communicative language, which forecloses our dream of escaping normative language in order to live in language *otherwise*. Wolfson's genius was that he could disintegrate a language and piece it back together from sounds and shadows borrowed from diverse other languages. In our world of dogmas and domineering discourses, Wolfson's fraught decompositions teach us that every language can be unbuttoned. Communication is only one of the (overstated) functions of language. The translingual is an invitation to play and experiment with language's limitless mutability.

from Let it Percolate: A Manifesto for Reading

Sophie Seita



Sophie Seita *Emilia Galotti's Colouring Book of Feelings* 2019 performance Kunsthalle Darmstadt Image credit: Laura Cobb Courtesy of the artist

"To translate is to surpass the source"—these are some words I put into the mouth of a character in *My Little Enlightenment Plays*, a performance project in which I rewrote, translated, responded to and, one could say, *corresponded with* some Enlightenment thinkers and writers.

(Isn't translation always the putting of words into someone's mouth, that someone sometimes being you?)



Sophie Seita *Emilia Galotti's Colouring Book of Feelings* 2019 performance Art Night London Image credit: Laura Cobb Courtesy of the artist

Words can contextualise, embellish, explain. They can be raw, they can be tender, they can be violent. They can be matter of fact or they can translate matter into something else. Words force us to be nuanced.

While translation trades in words, it also encompasses, for me, the moving of material from one place to another. Which is admittedly a broad delineation. But capaciousness can be a generosity. So. Translation might mean moving a language, an idea, an image, a material (like paper, Tippex, or clay) to a known or unknown elsewhere, or it might mean transforming it into another form, genre, medium, or context.

Like a manifesto, I see translation as a deeply pedagogical form. Because it teaches you to read. So here's my manifesto for reading.



Sophie Seita *Don Carlos, or, Royal Jelly* 2017 performance Arnolfini, Bristol Image credit: Lúa Ribeira Courtesy of the artist

Principle 1: No to verticality. Languages and art forms don't exist on a slope of significance.

Principle 2. No to valorizing originals. Which is an old hat in its critique but bears repeating. Yes to old hats.

Principle 3: We will view translation as a process for transformation.

Principle 4: We will remain open to our own translation.

Principle 5: A translational pedagogy is a playful pedagogy.

Principle 6: A playful pedagogy is unpredictable; we won't know where the ball will land or who, if anyone, will catch it.

Principle 7: Scratch the house style.



Sophie Seita *Don Carlos, or, Royal Jelly* 2019 video still [SPACE], London Camera: Katarzyna Perlak Courtesy of the artist

These almost-wise and not-quite-adamant demands serve a pragmatic truth. Which is provisional. And admits to not knowing. "[Not] knowing," as Jack Halberstam suggests in *The Queer Art of Failure*, "may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative [and] surprising ways of being in the world." Translation, like a manifesto, like pedagogy, is of a delayed futurity. If this were a proper manifesto, or a classroom, I would invoke a "we," a call for action.

What action is reading? Taking a shower is an activity. Taking a bath professes not-doing. To write in the bath is to enter the jurisdiction of floating. Of idleness. Lisa Robertson's she-dandy allows herself to pursue her thoughts languorously. What knowledge does leisure afford?

Working on a translation you do figure eights of reading. "To rush it breathlessly through does very well for a beginning. But that is not the way to read finally." Virginia Woolf is speaking about the need to reread a novel here, but her comment also resonates with our critical desire to extract, to unearth, as a means to an end.



Sophie Seita *Don Carlos, or, Royal Jelly* 2017 performance Arnolfini, Bristol Image credit: Lúa Ribeira Courtesy of the artist

Is parsing always in cahoots with parsimony?

Avoid finality! Etc.

A non-extractive reading might be one that answers in kind: not by translation into a different discourse, but by using a creative circuitry of aesthetic kinship.

Writing-through-reading can mean taking it in, chewing it. Letting it percolate.

I WANT A PEDAGOGY OF PERCOLATION.

see to see -

Needed Medicine by Manuel Axel Strain

GALLERY GACHET, 2020 Hagere Selam "shimby" Zegeye-Gebrehiwot



Image credit: Nicole Brabant Courtesy of the artist

The exhibition opens with a performance. The artist Manuel Axel Strain passes around cards with instructions for audience members before momentarily

disappearing. A section of Blood Alley cobblestone is vigorously scrubbed clean by Stephanie Gagne, who performs as a token white girl. We are instructed to text the exhibition title and a reply appears in the form of excerpts from racist online trolls. I respond with .

Strain reemerges dressed in white, clean-cut with perfectly sculpted hair and eyebrows. They apply a mixture of smudge ash, clay, and tumuth to their face, pressing it against the washed cobblestone. They methodically repeat this action before laying on the wet ground, outstretched. Strain's niece and others raise them up while audience members are invited to smudge. Strain names family members and ancestors before expressing an inability to feel the land—their ancestral land—then exits the alley.

Inside *Needed Medicine*, cedar branches rest on a table; a poised docent gesturing towards the main gallery. There are works in sculpture, video, body prints, and a mixed-media portrait. In the dual-channel video installation,

people introduce themselves on the right. They name origins and where they live, closing with "hay chxw q'a."

A close-up of the artist's mouth projects on the adjoining wall, translating the introductions with muted audio. One interview subject names ancestry traced to John A. Macdonald, while another names place-based origins as outer space followed by "hay chxw q'a" with fluent ease. The gaze of the artist is present although we only see their mouth in silent translation. Strategic humour emerges in the juxtaposition of different interview clips and in the form of subtle expressions on Strain's face. The dual-channel install becomes a panorama in the form of a mirrorprojected vista with a delay between projections.

The portraits and sculptures in the show ensnare me in the act of witnessing. The materials as autobiographic ephemera illuminate the hard and soft edges of who Needed *Medicine* is for and call into question what it means to be witnessed and by whom. Disparate healing traditions bound by colonialities are often pitted against one another, but in the show, they are situated in a dialogical approach to healing by juxtaposing the materials in single pieces. There is a medicine-wheel-cum-celticcross sculpture constructed out of transparent acrylic sheets filled with

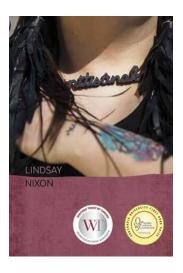
empty methadone bottles and medicine bundles across from a monolith of psychology and social work textbooks. The bases of both sculptures are encased in the tumuth, ash, and clay mixture, marking the passing of time throughout the drying process during the run of the exhibition. The artist also makes use of substances and materials that point to the ambient intensity of addictions: a childhood portrait embedded in a mixed media tapestry hangs from blue stretch tourniquets tied to a cedar branch. This work faces a series of portraits in the form of recent body prints.

After the opening buzz, I stop by the show sometimes just to stand in the middle. I think, "Here I am for you, show. Your steadfast admirer." I imagine our unmediated separateness and the sentience of the work. The art returns my gaze and we share a moment, nonplussed by the objectifying locus of the yt gayz.

In the closing performance, the artist bundles, ties, and carries the cedar from the exhibition entrance to the harbour with a few of us trailing behind, chatty and reverent. The cedar branches are bundled in red material and tied to Strain's biceps with blue stretch tourniquet. They climb down a low stone wall through some trees to stand by the water's edge. The artist unbundles the cedar and two otters

swim by. Strain speaks, then they enter the water, swimming around before coming back to land and having a cigarette. I'm shook. I wonder if this is how audience members felt when witnessing Rebecca Belmore's performance, "Vigil."

nîtisânak by Lindsay NixonMETONYM PRESS, 2018Jessie Loyer



Lindsay Nixon's *nîtisânak* is an accounting of beyond-family kinship, from the fragility of greatgrandmothers to first gay makeouts. It feels like they are sitting next to you, visiting, talking round and round, pulling you in with familiarity and firmness. There are two relationships we

cycle around: "B2B," an abusive ex-love, and Nixon's white mom who adopted them. Nixon's roles in these two relationships shaped their nurturing hospitality and fierce tenderness.

The book allows Nixon to ask big and personal questions: what does it mean to have a white mom? And, what does it mean if your white mom does pills, but keeps it middle class fancy while busting her NDN kid for weed? It's cliché to do pseudo philosophy in a memoir, but what sets Nixon apart is that they definitively answer their own questions: "There's a particular kind of bravado that comes with threatening to call the cops on your Indigenous child because they're holding weed. A bravado tied up in The Truth of the yt man, and an ideology that drug use is only illegal, wrong, and immoral on the prairies if it's done by class-poor brown and Black people."

The author has a self-clarity and a wondrous ability to weave theory into their memories, seamlessly. This is never more clear than in the twinned chapters "Bottoming" and "pihpihcêw," when the sexiest thing anyone ever said to Nixon is paired with rigorous queer theory. It's a love song to the communities that rarely get big time CanLit billing: prairie punk scenes, foster kid solidarity, urban NDNs. If you're from these places, you're dropped into nostalgic memories (the endnotes, especially,

feel delightfully familiar); if you're not, you are invited into scenes painted in emotive, musical detail.

The MVPs—"Prayer 9: for My NDN Bb Girls." and "The Prairie Wind is Gay Af."—are two chapters so lyrical they brought me to tears. Nixon has love affairs with cities; they know this is embarrassing: "I know it's a sin to love the city you're in," they write about Montréal. But the prairies are more than a love affair. The prairies are the emotional core for Nixon's genealogy: their first relative. This memoir is drenched in Chrystos and Missy Elliot, OG(kush) and messy bodies—Teenage Dirtbag, but as more than a passing aesthetic or a joke. Nixon's deft way of weaving their love life into ruminations on trans masculinities, violent policing, or feminism remind us that we're hearing an ethics of kinship be articulated.

nîtisânak is wildly interesting, thoughtful, and tender, but also utterly uncompromising. Nixon sees through the needs of a hungry audience who may have come to this queer Indigenous memoir to be titillated or scandalized and gently refuses. As they say, "Consider this reminder, dear reader: thank you for reading, but, while I feel no pressure to hide my pain from you and ground my story in neoliberalism, I don't owe you my pain."

This book is a litany of running away, but isn't despairing; Nixon finds a home with *nîtisânak*, which means "siblings," a non-gendered term in Cree. The possibility of Indigiqueer kinship is a salve for the wounds from the other promising but ultimately disappointing homes they try out.

These are the kinships, both toxic and tender, that created Lindsay Nixon. ■

The Corporeal Tongue: Hell Light Flesh by Klara du Plessis

PALIMPSEST PRESS, 2020 Khashayar Mohammadi



In her new poetry collection *Hell Light Flesh*, Klara du Plessis delves into the heart of linguistics in an attempt to do

with language everything that surface linguistics denies the common speaker. *Hell Light Flesh* takes all words at face value, and, through the process of repetition and introspection, reveals the primal abstraction of all language and speech.

In the poem "HAND" we read:
"Ow / Owl / Ow'll / like some new
kind of 1st person / accidentally saying
I'll (isle) I will." Here meaningful
play on auditory perception permits
du Plessis to use the full spectrum of
linguistic sound to map a schema of
neurological pathways, giving new
meaning to the illegible.

The book is a collection of three long poems: "HELL," "LIGHT," and "FLESH" each forming a layer of the poetic corpus. It also contains audiographs: light waves of oncelegible sounds abstracted into illegible scratches on paper, "leering behind the ears" and "pulling the hair." Through play, du Plessis acts as a cartographer of the artistic mind, circumnavigating the nodes that certain sounds or concepts have burned into it.

While the poet's debut poetry collection, *Ekke*, was an exploration (and even to some point a demonstration) of surface linguistics and their comparisons, *Hell Light Flesh* takes on and nestles the reader within the linguistics of Art, and,

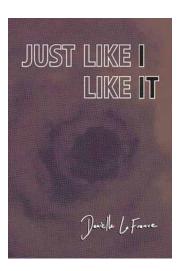
once comfortably at cruising altitude, begins to question the fundamentals of "artistic rhetoric" and the violence it can ensue on idealized and realized bodies. In the poem "LIGHT," du Plessis writes that "the act of proximity to an artwork, / whether from the perspective of the viewer / or the maker, is an activation." And yet, elsewhere in the poem, the same activation-by-proximity also presents a possibility to "hurt art."

Violence is shown to be the hierarchical loci of control, a status quo constructed upon the linguistic powerplay of the artistic world. Here and elsewhere du Plessis shows both the importance and impotence of language when faced with violence—whether personal, familial, or structural. The surgical precision with which du Plessis approaches language throughout Hell Light Flesh shows a profound knowledge of aesthetic modes. But rather than add to the platitudes of artistic expression, du Plessis uses her incisive knowledge in order to rebel against them.

Hell Light Flesh is a book one can read endlessly and always reach new morsels of meaning. This is a book of poetry that manufactures its own poetics, creating new landscapes of artistic expression in the process.

JUST LIKE I LIKE IT by Danielle LaFrance

таLonвooks, 2019 Matea Kulić & Leah Sharzer



LS We've been walking and talking about JUST LIKE I LIKE IT (JLILI) and noticing its slips of language. One of my favourite lines from the poem "It Makes Me Illiad" is: "By the authority infected in me, I pronounce it / perfectly alive." Actually, now that I'm writing it down, "slip" seems inaccurate because these are more like "fuckups." They feel deliberate. I imagine these troubling new expressions as the speaker's weapon against the standard flow of language, against the right way to say it.

MK Yeah, speech is patterned, especially idiomatic expressions which seem to be associated with a very deep place of language. The logic of an idiom, at least for "native speakers," creates a situation where the sentence almost completes itself. So I too saw these "fuck-ups" as a way of working against the already-known. LaFrance uses these linguistic log jams or "cram techniques" (her words) in lines like "As it kills, fix it, dear Henry" and also in the use of slightly altered song lyrics such as "Thank you Canada. Thank thank you silence."—a riff on Alanis Morissette's line "Thank you India." These troubling new expressions are also to be wielded against state violence/silence and our complicity/complacency to its (capitalist) flows. But as the author writes in the last section of the book, "poetry is never enough."

LS I was curious to know what you made of that final section, "NOTESKNOTSNOTSNAUGHTS." There are many possibilities crammed into this title: notes, not, know, naught ... and now I'm seeing no too.
Unsurprisingly, this "explanatory" section both fulfills and resists our desire to understand the rest of the book. My younger self would have concentrated on how the poet resists meaning, but now that I teach literature,

I sympathize with my students who sometimes just want to know, "what does it all mean!" For example, LaFrance tells us that "I am dead because it's stupid I pronounce myself to it dead' comingles with the emotional turbulence of Friedrich Nietzche's aphorisms I am dead because I am stupid' and I am stupid because I am dead." For me this referencing is generative rather than conclusive, generous rather than aloof.

MK On my first reading of *JLILI*, I had trouble sitting down with it. I was reading the words, and it wasn't as if they were complicated or inaccessible, but somehow I wasn't absorbing them. I had the urge to stand up and read the words out loud, almost yelling—but my daughter was asleep in the room next door, so I had to yell in a kind of muted fashion, pacing around the kitchen. At the beginning of "NOTESKNOTS..." LaFrance writes that "IT MAKES ME ILLIAD' begins with rage" and that "rage is to be sung," but, she adds, "at what tempo?" While I was pacing, I thought about the word *persona* and how rage is not

a tempo you can sustain outwardly for an endless duration. So I saw in the end section—LaFrance talking about her writing process, her residencies, her Greekness, her nuanced response to the accusation of sexual harassment levied against Avital Ronell....I don't want to say that we're getting the real Danielle here and not her poet or public persona—but I saw, as you say, a generosity, a slower inward tempo (more like hushed yelling), while at the same time a refusal to allow the reader any positive conclusions, like aha this is "it." At the end of our walk we said, "we get at it but we don't get it." So there's no satisfaction...

I feel like there's so much more we could talk about—war narratives, masculinity, simultaneous inputs, saturation, sex—but we're already past our word count. Do you have any last words?

LS I love this book!

MK Me too! ■

contributors

SIKU ALLOOLOO is an Inuk/Haitian/Taíno writer, artist, and community builder from Denendeh (NWT) and Mittimatalik, NU. She works in poetry, creative nonfiction, and multimedia. Her sealskin triptych, *Akia*, was commissioned for the *HEXSA'AM* exhibition (2019), and will show again at the Winnipeg Art Gallery's opening of the Inuit Art Centre in 2021.

OANA AVASILICHIOAEI interweaves poetry, translation, photography, sound, and performance to explore an expanded idea of language, polyphonic structures, and borders. Her six collections of poetry and poetry hybrids include *Eight Track* (Talonbooks, 2019) and *Limbinal* (Talonbooks, 2015). She's physically based in Montréal and virtually at oanalab.com and soundcloud.com/oanalab.

CLINT BURNHAM was born in Comox, British Columbia, which is on the traditional territory of the K'ómoks (Sathloot) First Nation, centred historically on kwaniwsam. He is Graduate chair and professor of English at Simon Fraser University; recent books include *Pound at Guantánamo* (poetry, 2016) and *Does the Internet have an Unconscious? Slavoj Žižek and Digital Culture* (theory, 2018).

KLARA DU PLESSIS is a poet, critic, and literary curator. Her debut collection of long poems, *Ekke*, won the 2019 Pat Lowther Memorial Award and was shortlisted for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award. Her second book-length narrative poem, *Hell Light Flesh*, was released in September 2020 from Palimpsest Press. She lives in Montréal and Cape Town, and writes in English, Afrikaans, and multilingually.

ELISA FERRARI works with text, images, and sound. Her projects become installations, workshops, artist books, and performances. Recently, her work has been presented at the Oscillation Festival (Brussels), Kamias Triennial (Quezon City), Nanaimo Art Gallery, and Western Front. She is currently working on a book of acrostics written with poet Peter Culley under the pseudonym Ana Anani Amiata. She is one of the hosts of *Soundscape* on Vancouver Co-op Radio, CFRO 100.5FM.

NICOLE RAZIYA FONG is a poet living in Montréal. Past work has appeared in publications including *Social Text*, *carte blanche*, *filling Station*, *The Volta*, and *Cordite*, as well as in translation in *Exit*, *OEI* & *Revue Watts*. She is the author of *PERFACT* (Talonbooks, 2019).

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DALLAS HUNT is Cree and a member of Wapsewsipi (Swan River First Nation) in Treaty 8 territory in Northern Alberta. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literatures at UBC. His creative and critical work has been published in *Prairie Fire*, Settler Colonial Studies, the Malahat Review, Arc Poetry, Canadian Literature, and the American Indian Culture and Research Journal. His first book of poetry, CREELAND, will be published with Nightwood Editions in Spring 2021.

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MATEA KULIĆ is an editor, graduate student, and mama. In 1988, her family left what was formerly known as Yugoslavia to settle in what is currently known as Canada—an event which inspired decades-long thinking through questions of country, language, and belonging. Editing this issue of *The Capilano Review* has been an opportunity to revisit and rearrange that thinking once more—may its evolution continue.

JESSIE LOYER is Cree-Métis and a member of Michel First Nation. She's written for the *Montreal Review of Books, Prairie Fire, CV2*, and *Canadian Art*. As a librarian working in Calgary, her research looks at Indigenous information literacy and relationality.

KHASHAYAR MOHAMMADI is a queer, Iranian-born, Toronto-based poet, writer, translator, and photographer. He is the author of the poetry chapbooks *Moe's Skin* (ZED, 2018), *Dear Kestrel* (knife | fork | book, 2019), and *Solitude is an Acrobatic Act* (above/ground press, 2020). His debut poetry collection, *Me, You, Then Snow*, is forthcoming from Gordon Hill Press.

AMAL RANA is a Pushcart Prize-nominated poet and teaching artist working at the intersections of racial justice and the arts. Their writing has appeared in multiple journals and anthologies. Amongst other things, she collaborates with multiple communities to vision decolonial futures and unearth forgotten Muslim histories. rosewaterpoet.com

SOPHIE SEITA works with text, sound, and translation on the page, in performance, and often in collaboration. She's the author of, most recently, *My Little Enlightenment Plays* (Pamenar, 2020) and *Provisional Avant-Gardes* (Stanford University Press, 2019); the translator of Uljana Wolf's *Subsisters: Selected Poems* (Belladonna, 2017); and the editor of *The Blind Man* reprint (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2017). She has performed at La MaMa Galleria, Bold Tendencies, the Royal Academy, the Serpentine, Raven Row, Parasol Unit, Art Night London, the Arnolfini, Kunsthalle Darmstadt, JNU (New Delhi), and elsewhere. After three years of teaching at Cambridge, she's currently an Assistant Professor at Boston University, and co-organizes the Sound/Text seminar at Harvard.

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DAMLA TAMER (born in Istanbul, Turkey) is an artist and educator living on unceded Coast Salish Territories. She works with mark-making, textiles, and spoken performance. Her practice and pedagogy search for a new ethics of temporality through the relationships between safety and vitality. Her work has been the focus of solo exhibitions at Darling Foundry and the fifty fifty arts collective. She is a founding member of A.M. (Art Mamas) artist group, and teaches on a sessional basis at UBC and Emily Carr University.

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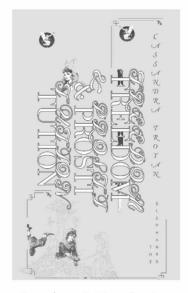
FAN WU is a writer and performer who's currently working on his relatively weak sense of object permanence. You can find his work online at *MICE Magazine*, *Aisle 4*, *baest journal*, and *Koffler Digital*. He loves to collaborate: email him at fanwu2@gmail.com with wacky, luscious ideas.

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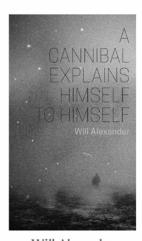
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The Capilano Review (ISSN 0315 3754) is published three times a year by The Capilano Review Contemporary Arts Society, Suite 210, 111 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6B 1H4. Subscription rates for one year are \$25 for individuals and \$60 for institutions. Digital-only subscriptions are \$10. Subscribe online at www.thecapilanoreview.com/subscribe.

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The Capilano Review is grateful for the financial support of the City of Vancouver, the BC Gaming Commission, the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts. We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Vancouver Foundation and the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Published October 2020 | Printed by Hemlock Printers in Burnaby, BC

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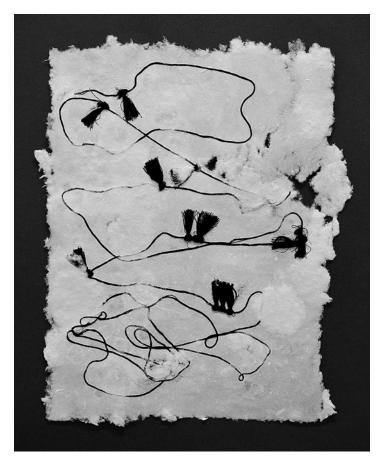
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